



Language, Likeness, and the Han Phenomenon of Convergence

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Abstract

Although in the classical Chinese outlook the world can only be made sense of through the means devised by the ancient sages and handed down by the tradition, the art of exegesis has long been a neglected subject. Scholars have been all too eager to dispute what their chosen text says than to pay attention to the nuanced ways in which it hones its tools. This dissertation aims to somewhat redirect the discipline's attention by focusing on Xu Shen's *Shuowen Jiezi*. I approach this compendium of Han philology, typically regarded as a repository of disparate linguistic data, as underlied by a tight theoretical framework reducible to one simple idea.

I begin with the discussion of the competing visions of the six principles, for two millenia the basis of instruction in the arts of letters. I identify the relationship between abstraction and representation and the principle of convergence as the main points of contention. I take Xu Shen's convergence to pertain to the Han practice of relating words through sound similarity. This in turn I interpret as one particular manifestation of dispositional categorization (類情), a fortunes turning term in the exegetical tradition of the *Change*.

The third chapter illustrates Xu Shen's twin techniques of relating and differentiating along with the worldview of the *Change* from which they derive. It introduces the concepts of matching and extension, and pits them against their counterparts of mirroring and analogy. The leitmotifs of the fourth chapter are Xu Shen's argument against the arbitrariness of sign and the relationship between linguistic and

cognitive categorization. The fifth chapter compares the *Shuowen* to other works of Han lexicography, character primers in particular. The phenomenon of paronomastic glossing is examined here in detail. I argue that Xu Shen's ordering of classical vocabulary on the basis of graphic resemblance and the concomitant explanations are but projections of paronomasia into the realm of semiotics. The final chapter situates this likeness driven interpretative strategy against earlier attitudes to language. I close by intimating the creative potential entailed in Xu Shen's recasting of fragmentary diachronic knowledge as a comprehensive synchronic system.

Contents

Front matter

1 Six principles	p. 1
2 Postscript to <i>Shuowen</i>	p. 43
3 Categorization	p. 51
4 Narrative clues	p. 94
5 Convergence	p. 121
6 Likeness	p. 238

Appendices and references

Acknowledgements

During my graduate years I was privileged to receive the guidance of:

Feng Shengli	Without sound you're blind
Michael Puett	Excruciating detail
Robert Gimello	<i>Vyavahāram anāśritya</i> ¹
Jiří Holba	<i>Sarvaṃ ca yujyate</i> ²
Eivind Kahrs	<i>Yad gr̥hītam</i> ³
John Smith	It's <i>their</i> language ⁴

Li Wai-yee taught my most enjoyable class at Harvard and was kind enough to agree to read this dissertation at a late stage of its composition.

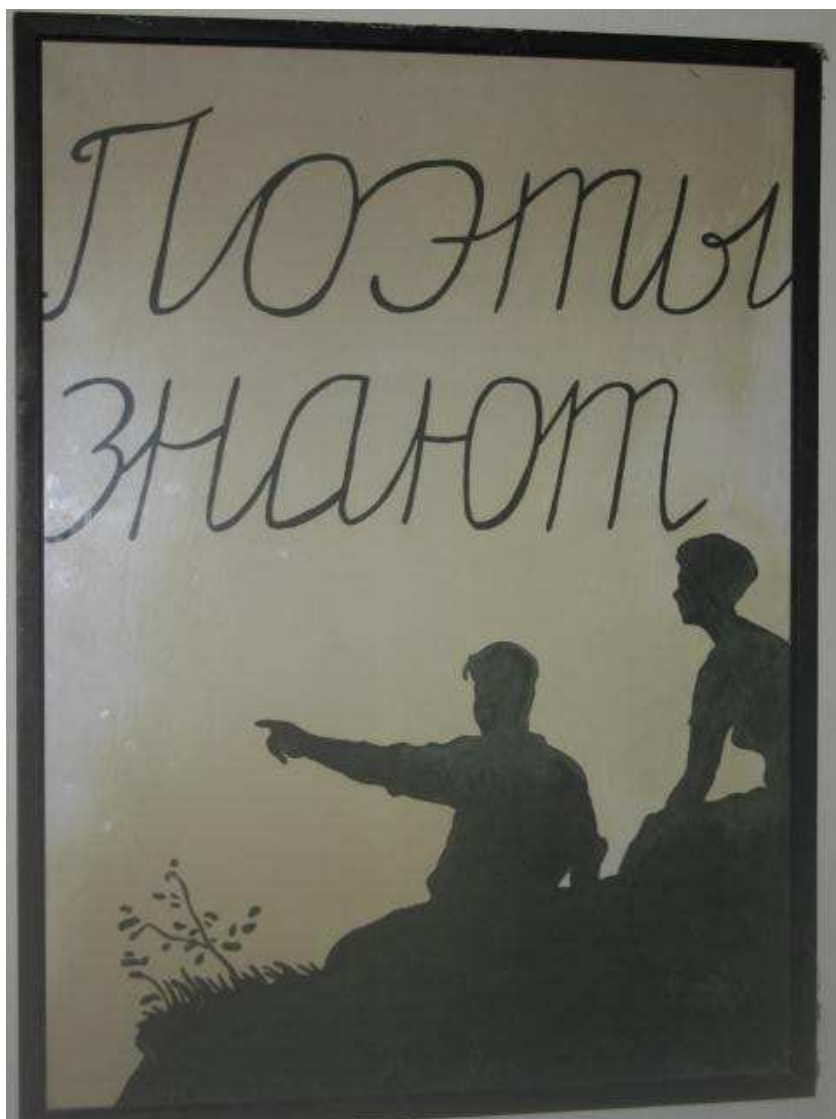
¹ ... *paramārtho na deśyate* ... Ultimate truth is not taught except upon the foundation of conventional usage. (*Mūlamādhyamikakārika* 24:10 quoted in Gimello, 1983, p. 71)

² ... *tasya śūnyatā yasya yujyate/ sarvaṃ na yujyate tasya śūnyaṃ yasya na yujyate* Everything is coherent for the person to whom emptiness is coherent; nothing is coherent for the person to whom emptiness is not coherent. ((*Mūlamādhyamikakārika* 24:14 quoted in Holba, 2001, p. 116, n. 20)

³ *avijñātaṃ nigadenaiva śabdyate / anangnāv iva śuṣkaidho na taj jvalati karhicit* // What has been taken [from the teacher's mouth] but not understood [and] is uttered by mere recitation, that never flares up, like dry firewood on a non-fire. (*Nirukta* 1.18 quoted in Kahrs, 1998, p. 46)

⁴ In response to my objection that the composers of the *Mahābhārata* once again violated the rules of Sanskrit grammar. (Cambridge, Lent term 2002)

Kubikovi, Davidovi, Markovi



Сижу за решеткой в темнице сырой.

Вскормленный в неволе орел молодой.

Я и садовник, я же и цветок,

В темнице мира я не одинок.

Chapter 1. Six Principles

The 'six principles of conceiving writing,' a fiercely contested term that has, in its broader scope of interpretation, evolved into the theoretical framework spanning the three basic disciplines of Chinese philology -- namely, paleography, phonology, and exegesis-- first appears as part of the job description of the [Royal] Guardian, one of the high ranking offices in the purported hierarchy of the idealized Zhou State:

保氏掌諫王惡而養國子以道乃教之六藝一曰五禮二曰六樂三曰五射四曰五馭五曰六書六曰九數乃教之六儀 (周禮 地官 保氏)

The Guardian is in charge of censuring the ruler's excesses. In this capacity he nurtures¹ the scions of noble families with the Way by teaching them the Six Arts of Conduct and the Six Manners of Appearance.

The Six Arts consist of five suites of rites and six tunes of music, five tricks of archery and five gambits of chariot combat, six principles of writing and nine parts of mathematics. ... (*Rituals of Zhou*, "Offices of the Earth Chapter," Royal Guardian Section)

The precise connotation of "first appears," however, depends on how one chooses to read the complex transmission history of the matrix text. According to the account preserved by the Eastern Han 東漢 scholar Ban Gu 班固 (32- 92 A.D.), a copy of the *Rituals of Zhou* was obtained by Liu De 劉德, King Xian of Hejian 河間獻王 (ruled 155-129 B.C.), a collector of texts written in the scripts predating the Qin 秦 unification of writing (221 B.C.) and book burning (213 B.C.). From Liu De's possession the text passed into the archive established by his elder brother Emperor Wu 武帝 (ruled 146-86 B.C.) for the purpose of gathering documents that could patch the badly damaged textual traditions. Here, it appears, the *Rituals of Zhou* lied virtually untouched until the time of Emperor Cheng 成帝 (ruled 32 -6 A.D.), who commissioned the scholar Liu Xiang 劉向

¹ The Guardian's task of "nurturing" contrasts with the Teacher's job of "instructing" the young elite (師氏教之保氏養之 說文解字注 十五卷 四頁 755). Hereafter quotations from Duan Yucai's commentary (1988), the fountainhead of this essay, are abbreviated as (755).

to arrange and summarize the contents of the imperial library, a task completed by his son Liu Xin 劉歆 in the work *Seven Divisions* 七略.²

Liu Xin and his erudition came to play a pivotal role under the short-lived Xin 新 dynasty (9-25 A.D.). For Wang Mang 王莽, the founder of the new dynasty, strove to invest his rule with legitimacy by deliberately establishing a government modeled after the venerated Duke of Zhou. During this time, the *Rituals of Zhou*, a text that invests absolute powers in the king,³ came to be regarded as representing the traditional system of the Zhou rulers most fully and was adopted as the principal authority on state organization. Moreover, during his service to Wang Mang, Liu Xin succeeded in having a government post established for a scholar of the work.

After the Han restoration, Liu Xin's scholarship and the *Rituals of Zhou* continued to be esteemed by adherents of old texts whose predilections eventually contributed to the shaping of the official canon. At the same time, another group of scholars came to suspect the texts written in obsolete scripts that had mostly surfaced during Emperor Wu's reign as having been fabricated by curiosity lovers in order to undermine conventional usage. This skeptical line has been taken up by later figures, such as the Song 宋 historian Sima Guang 司馬光 or the Qing 清 reformer Kang Youwei 康有爲. According to the latter, Liu Xin himself forged the *Rituals of Zhou* and other texts written in the old scripts, such as the *Zuo Commentary on the Annals* 春秋左傳, to further the cause of Wang Mang.⁴ Kang Youwei's influential but scantily supported contention has

² 漢書藝文志 景十三王傳 *History of the Han*. "Essay on Arts and Letters (30)," "Biographies of the Thirteen Sons of Emperor Jing (53)."

³ Puett (2010) pp. 129-154.

been countered, among others, by the meticulous textual studies of Bernhard Karlgren and Sven Broman that corroborate the pre-Qin origins of the *Rituals of Zhou*.⁵

Whether one considers Liu Xin a conscientious librarian or an exceptionally gifted forger, he will always occupy a seminal position in the history of Chinese letters. While his principal composition, the *Seven Divisions*, has not survived to the modern day, the classification scheme introduced in the work has been explicitly followed by Ban Gu in his "Essay on Arts and Letters," a narrative catalogue of the imperial archives as they stood in Ban Gu's time. The account accompanying the ninth section (Philology) of the first division (Six Classical Arts) elaborates the six principles of writing in some detail. Given the degree to which the essay follows Liu Xin's template as well as Ban Gu's generally conservative approach to citing sources, it is reasonable to expect, as most scholars have done, that Ban Gu reproduces Liu Xin's vision of the six principles here:

易曰上古結繩以治後世聖人易之以書契百官以治萬民以察蓋取諸夬夫揚於王庭言其宜揚於王者朝廷其用最大也古者八歲入小學故周官保氏掌養國子教之六書謂象形象事象意象聲轉注假借造字之本也漢興蕭何草律亦著其法曰太史試學童能諷書九千字以上乃得爲史 ... (漢書 藝文誌)

According to the *Change*: "In early antiquity administrators tied knots on cords in order to govern. The sages of later generations replaced the system of knotted cords with written documents. Through letters officials managed affairs and the population was scrutinized. The sages likely grasped the idea of writing on the basis of the hexagram Resolve." Moreover, the hexagram statement "To resolve is to present to the court"⁶ expresses the belief that the use of writing is maximized in submitting memorials to the ruler and his court. In ancient times, instruction in the art of philology began at the age of seven. Thus according to the *Rituals of Zhou*, the Tutor, who was in charge of raising the scions of noble families, taught the six principles of writing, that is to say, mimicking the shape, mimicking the event, mimicking the intention, mimicking the sound, transferring explanation, and loan. These six constitute the basis for conceiving characters.

After the rise of the Han, [chancellor] Xiao He issued a statute also stressing this rule. It read: "The Grand Scribe examines candidates, those that can pronounce and write more than nine thousand characters may become scribes. ..."

⁴ Kang Youwei (1931) 卷三 漢書藝文志辨僞下.

⁵ Karlgren (1931), Broman (1961).

⁶ 周易 夬卦辭 *Zhou Change*. Resolve Hexagram Statement (#43).

Apart from naming and ordering the six principles, Ban Gu's account is significant for placing them within a narrative sequence. The opening quotation from section B2⁷ of the "Commentary on the Appended Verbalizations 繫辭傳" of the *Change* follows a pattern where four of the six principal sections in the first division of Ban Gu's essay are introduced by a line from this challenging text that exercised unrivaled influence during the Han. The "Appended Verbalizations" present the invention of writing as necessitated by the growing inadequacy of an earlier bookkeeping device. While the system of knotted cords first made governance possible, writing enabled officials to communicate with, and thereby influence, the court. At this point the *Change* account is resumed with an expanded version of the *Rituals of Zhou* segment on the six principles. During the halcyon days of the Zhou, boys from aristocratic families eligible for service to the dynasty were introduced to an identical set of principles underlying the language of official communication. From here the narrative jumps to the rise of the Han and the proclamation of a new recruiting policy.

The argument implicit in the structure of the narrative is that after centuries of political fragmentation and dispersal of textual traditions, the emergence of the Han meant return to the idea that at the heart of proper government lies the right use of writing. While writing certainly was employed and continued to evolve during the long period separating the Han from the Zhou, its various mutations did not observe the same foundational principles. By inserting the recollection of the ancient Zhou practice just before the mention of the new Han policy of choosing public servants through a test of literacy, the narrative insinuates that writing competence is not just about the ability to

⁷ Following Zhu Xi's division

reproduce a finite set of random symbols but, more fundamentally, about the grasp of a specific array of principles governing their constitution. The problem is that by Liu Xin's time eight centuries had passed since the alleged Royal Tutor last taught the six principles. Given there is no indication of the existence of an unbroken commentarial tradition accompanying the *Rituals of Zhou*, scholars have come to agree that the identification of the six principles and their initial arrangement are the invention of Liu Xin, the man who, so it seems, raised them from the dust of the Han archives.

This supposition is borne out by the fact that the other two accounts of the six principles that have survived from the Eastern Han period differ from the description recorded by Ban Gu. Significantly, both these accounts are given by scholars stemming from Liu Xin's intellectual lineage: Zheng Zhong 鄭眾 was the son of Zheng Xing 鄭興, a pupil of Liu Xin; Xu Shen 許慎 was a student of Jia Da 賈逵, whose father had learnt the *Zuo Commentary* and the *Rituals of Zhou* from Liu Xin. Apparently, even Liu Xin's immediate successors viewed his arrangement of the six principles as lacking the kind of indisputable authority that only an ancient pedigree could provide, consequently opting to adapt the six principles to their own understanding. Where Zheng Zhong's revision has been handed down in the most abbreviated form possible, i.e., limited to the designation and the ordering of the six principles *in situ*, Xu Shen's adjustment comes with definitions and examples and is set in the middle of an extensive narrative. In order to approach each conception on equal footing, I shall initially restrict my comparative analysis to the two aspects featured by all, namely terminology and arrangement. For easy reference, I also include Ban Gu's list in the chart below:

班固	象形	象事	象意	象聲	轉注	假借	卒	孝和永元四年
鄭眾	象形	會意	轉注	處事	假借	諧聲	卒	孝章建初八年
許慎	指事	象形	形聲	會意	轉注	假借	六書成	孝和永元十二年

Ban Gu, died 92 A.D. Zheng Zhong, died 83 A.D. Xu Shen, list completed 100 A.D.

phonetic loan	harmonizing sound	phonetic loan
transferring explanation	phonetic loan	transferring explanation
mimicking the sound	locating the event	combining intentions
mimicking the intention	transferring explanation	shape(ing) sound
mimicking the event	combining intentions	mimicking the shape
mimicking the shape	mimicking the shape	indicating the event
		↑

Three of the six principles are termed the same in each of the conceptions.⁸ Although the designations of the remaining three differ, the disagreement is only partial: all cite event, intention, and sound respectively. Every author thus appears to refer to the same general set of notions. This evident consensus points in the direction of a common source for the three conceptions. While it is impossible to prove that Ban Gu's list embodies that common source, one is certainly struck by the dearth of nuance in his choice of the first word in the primary quartet, the sort of ambiguity one associates with an only just formulated theory. That this lack of discrimination entails imprecision is played out by the one principle in whose designation the other two authors agree. 'Combining intentions' describes the phenomenon where two graphical symbols capable of standing independently come together to express a single notion far more effectively than the cryptic 'mimicking the intention.' The same cannot be said with equal confidence about the two remaining principles. 'Mimicking' is arguably as suggestive a word as 'locating' or 'indicating' in regard to an 'event,' i.e., an abstract or general concept, while the discrepancies between 'mimicking the sound,' 'harmonizing the sound,' and 'shape(ing) sound' intimate a potentially vital difference in the conceptualization of the principle. The

⁸ Even if the different conceptions require diverging translations of the same terms, to preserve the surface level identity, I opt here for the most general as well as commonly used renderings.

precise nature of this divergence, however, is impossible to ascertain without additional information. Fortunately, the distinct manners in which each author orders the six principles offer some clues.

But let us first work out some of the far from obvious strategies entailed in interpreting a Han sextet. A practical guide can be assembled on the basis of the two texts discussed already. Ban Gu opens his general remarks on the Six Classical Arts, the first of the half-a-dozen divisions that make up his "Essay on Arts and Letters," with a characterization of each of the five arts occupying the second through sixth positions. He concludes:

五者蓋五常之道相須而備而易爲之原

These five [i.e., Records, Poetry, Rites, Music, and Annals, irrespective of order], in all likelihood, correspond to the Way of the Five Constants, mutually dependent for the sake of completion. But when it comes to the source, they all spring from the Change [i.e., the first of the arts]. ...

The paramount rule attested by Ban Gu's account is that the head stands above and outside the ensuing members by virtue of its unique capacity to engender the set. This positing of a common origin explains the other tenet expressed initially, namely, that each member is implicated in the remainder of the set to the effect that the absence of one precludes the fruition of others. Translated into the language of exegesis, the second rule states that members of a set are to be interpreted with an eye to their relations, not independently of one another. Consequently, a change in the way one member is conceptualized will bear upon the meaning of the remaining five. While in his general remarks Ban Gu averts (by altering the order of the bottom quintet from that of the main body of his text) the prospect of some relations being more productive than others, the *Rituals of Zhou* listing of the Six Arts of Conduct is suggestive of precisely one such line of analysis.

Presented with a register consisting of Rites, Music, Archery, Chariot Combat, Writing, and Math, even a complete stranger to the world of ancient China will pick out the two middle terms as pertaining to martial skills and link the bottom pair as involving faculties of reasoning, verbal and quantitative respectively. That the two initial arts -- incidentally, the only duet featured in both the Six Arts of Conduct and the Six Classical Arts -- are likewise to be conceived as a yoked pair is demonstrated by the following line from Ban Gu's synopsis of Music:

孔子曰安上治民莫善於禮移風易俗莫善於樂二者相與並行

According to Confucius: "In relieving the superior, in reining the masses, nothing surpasses the Rites. For altering the norms, for changing the customs, nothing equals Music." That is to say, the two add to each other and operate together.

Apart from supporting Ban Gu's assertion that the coupling of Rites and Music is complementary in nature and that the two function in mutual dependence, the statement attributed to Confucius overtly lays down the respective roles of the arts in the process. Rites, the head of the pair, guarantee the existence of social order. Music, the tail end of the pair, effects changes in that order. Music's part would be inconceivable without Rites, for a world which is not ordered does not have norms that could be altered. Conversely, while Rites could subsist unaided, without the transformative power of Music the order inflicted by them would lack the capacity to adapt to new conditions. Music is the extension of Rites, Rites feed off Music.

Confucius's fine distinctions in regard to Rites and Music highlight three further aspects of the rule of complementary pairs. First, the limbs of a yoked pair serve essentially the same function. Second, the head of a pair, as the prerequisite of the process, is entailed in its successor. Finally, the subordinate member triggers its specific operations by means of extending the ruling counterpart.

That the idea of pairing up the Six Arts of Conduct can be analogously applied to the six principles of writing, themselves constitutive of the Arts, is illustrated by the Southern Tang 南唐 scholar Xu Kai 徐鍇, whose 'theory of the three harnesses 三耦之說'⁹ remains the most widely quoted guideline for constructing the six principles. Moreover, the two terms employed by Xu Kai to characterize the respective members of each pair, namely 'full,' or, 'concrete' (實) and 'empty,' or, 'abstract' (虛), also continue to be exploited in various ways by interpreters. The vantage point of Xu Kai's theory facilitates the identification of some key differences as well as similarities between the three Eastern Han conceptions of the six principles.

To begin with, although Ban Gu and Xu Shen differ in their respective orderings of the members of the first two duets, both scholars are in basic agreement in regard to the way in which the six principles pair up. Zheng Zhong, on the other hand, conceptualizes the threefold division of the six principles along different lines. Readers conditioned by the heavy slant that modern scholarship has taken toward the joint Ban-Xu model may question the very feasibility of viewing Zheng Zhong's list through the lens of a tripartite division. On a more nuanced examination, however, the linked members of Zheng Zhong's pairs begin to exhibit functional affinities of their own kind.

Zheng Zhong's initial duet consisting of 'mimicking the shape' and 'combining intentions' brings together the two principles that underlie the earliest documented type of graphic analysis. Its best known example appears in the *Zuo Commentary*:

夫文止戈爲武 (春秋左傳宣公十二年)

Now, from the point of view of graphic analysis, to restrain a halberd makes martial prowess.

⁹ 說文解字繫傳 卷一 上字條 In Ding Fubao (1932) 5:17.

The graph 止 mimics the appearance of the base of a tree or the bed of grass. Since a similar role is served in the human body by the fringes of the lower limb, the graph is taken to refer to the foot. Through extending the meaning to 'the place at which the foot comes to rest' the graph comes to express the notion with which it is most commonly associated, 'to stop.' The graph 戈 in turn depicts a halberd, a lance with a flat spearhead. Placed together, the two graphs combine their specially intended meanings of 'to stop' and 'attacking instrument' into a graph that captures 'martial prowess.' The first part of the signifying process relies on the principle of 'mimicking the shape,' the second part is serviced by the law of 'combining intentions.' Neither principle is named explicitly.

The fact that laying down the weapon does not strike one as the defining feature of military prowess underscores the polemical purpose to which the earliest cases of graphic analysis are put. The present contention launches a famous speech in which the King of Chu rejects a proposition to ostentatively build a mount from the corpses of enemy troops as a commemoration of his just concluded military victory. The gist of the King's exemplary oration, rich in literary and historical allusions, is captured by Xu Shen in the following entry on 'military prowess':

楚莊王曰夫武定功戢兵故止戈爲武（說文解字 卷十二 戈部 武字條）

King Zhuang of Chu declared: "The moment Emperor Wu achieved his goal, he stored away the weapons. That is why military prowess consists in halting the arms."

The suggestion initially presented to King Zhuang reflects a practice common at the time. The King counters this customary advice with an argument based on evidence pieced together from several hymns of the *Poems*. The cited songs describe the conquest of the virtuous Emperor Wu, the founder of the Zhou, over the corrupt Emperor Zhou 紂, the last ruler of the Shang 商. Emperor Wu, whose name after all is Martial Prowess, uses

force to topple his oppressive predecessor, but founds the new dynasty on righteous conduct, not on the strength of armies. This laudable precedent, as captured in the *Poems*, enables King Zhuang to define martial prowess in a way that contravenes established word usage and that resonates with the overall moral tone of the *Zuo Commentary*. Graphic analysis is employed in the process as an illustration, not the rationale behind his point.

But even such context driven illustration has to rely on a recognized notion to work. The audience's implicit acceptance of the principles of 'mimicking the shape' and 'combining intentions' allows the speaker to construe the graph in the desired way without appearing willful. Contemporary paleographers, however, equipped with evidence that goes far beyond the imagination of King Zhuang's contemporaries, like to point out that the King's analysis of the graph 𠂔 does not accord with the evidence of oracle bone inscriptions, where, so they claim, the graph represents "a man walking (or marching) with a weapon."¹⁰ In seeking to return the graph to its earlier, common sense etymology, these critics miss the original aspect of traditional writing analysis. At stake in King Zhuang's graphic analysis is not whether he gives the historically accurate explanation of the graph for martial prowess, but whether his deliberately unconventional analysis is consistent with recognized principles.

By pairing the two principles featured in graphic analysis before the Han and by placing them at the head of his list, Zheng Zhong roots his conception of the six principles in a long established practice. He thereby also embraces its two main features,

¹⁰ Recorded in Li Wai-yee, *Lord Xuan* 12.2i, n. 204.

namely, the link to innovative use of language and the need to be supported by considerations that lie beyond the surface of the graph.

Similar fidelity to early sources explains Zheng Zhong's third pairing. Readers of excavated texts dating from the Warring States period have long noticed the essentially phonetic nature of the various scripts featured in these finds that contrasts with the form conscious way in which writing came to be standardized under the Han. As a follower and a perceptive student of the so-called old texts, Zheng Zhong found himself in the same predicament. Consequently, he identified the phonetic aspect as the defining feature of two of the principles, which he duly matched, and equated the source of the sound rendering capacity with the [phonetic] loan principle, the head of his final pair.

The implications of this move have not been lost on Bernhard Karlgren, who coopts Zheng Zhong's third pair into his own model of the "six kinds of script elements."¹¹ Central to Karlgren's schema is the idea that writing renders words. While the tenet may sound trivial to alphabet users, in the Chinese context it was once revolutionary. For the idea that Chinese characters express meaning directly (表意文字) has a long standing among a strand of native scholars, who found eager followers in early orientalist, since Leibnitz fascinated with the prospect of a writing system that did not rely on the sounds of a spoken language. This facet of the Enlightenment dream of universality, which has, among other things, for decades impeded the deciphering of the Maya and Egyptian hieroglyphs, has been categorically dispelled by John DeFrancis.¹² Through a comparative study of world's writing systems, DeFrancis, a sinologist in the

¹¹ Karlgren (1963) p. 1.

¹² DeFrancis (1989).

mold of Karlgren, proves a point originally raised by Ignace Gelb,¹³ namely, that the capacity of a simple graphical device to develop into a system is contingent on the "rebus principle." Simply put, the rebus principle denotes a procedure by which a graphical symbol suggestive of a real world referent is taken to stand for the sound and only the sound of the word naming the specific entity.

It would be a long stretch to argue that Zheng Zhong's understanding of the phonetic aspect of the script corresponds to the unconditional divorcing of sound and meaning that characterizes the rebus principle. Nevertheless, his particular naming of the sixth principle (harmonizing sound) and its subordinate position in the final pair (following loan usage) establish the grounds for development in this direction. By making the last principle but an extended application of the phonetic loan, Zheng Zhong downplays its other, non-phonetic operations. A script that relies primarily on so defined two phonetic principles is, for practical purposes, reduced to the role of phonetic transcription. The degree of precision of this transcription comes to measure the script's effectiveness, or rather ineffectiveness as DeFrancis would have it in regard to Chinese characters.

Paradoxically, where Zheng Zhong's final pair occasions support for the sound oriented group of scholars, the initial pair, understandably eschewed by Karlgren, advances the argument of the opposite camp. For, as one will recall, the process of signification of the graph 'martial prowess' detailed above never required the mediation of spoken language. The graph articulates its meaning directly and as such can facilitate communication independently of any particular spoken language.

¹³ Gelb (1952).

The functional dichotomy of the first and final pairs reflects an important aspect of pre-Han thinking about language. Early exegetes analyze words either exclusively on the basis of their graphical record -- the level of graph (文) corresponding to Zheng Zhong's first pair -- or solely on the grounds of their pronunciation -- the level of names (名) or speech (言) matching Zheng Zhong's final pair. There is no evidence for an exegetical procedure combining the two levels. Notably absent is also any mention of characters (字), the principal target of later analysis.

Mindful of the outlined polarity and in light of Zheng Zhong's commitment to Warring States' sources, what is one to make of his middle pair, comprised of principles lacking such explicit precedents? Given the pair's position between incommensurate ends, should one view its function as intermediary, i.e., as bringing together previously disconnected modes of analysis? Possibly, but in the absence of further evidence this is speculation. Suffice to note that Zheng Zhong perceives a functional affinity between the two notions translated as 'transferring explanation' and 'placing the event.'

These two terms, this essay argues, play key roles in the conception of Zheng Zhong's successor Xu Shen. I have so far relied on the third rule of interpretation, i.e., yoked pairs, to posit common ground between Ban Gu and Xu Shen, so that I could highlight Zheng Zhong's divergences. By instead employing the first rule, i.e., primacy of the head, it is equally feasible to locate an affinity between Ban Gu and Zheng Zhong, and pit Xu Shen against them. While the approach offers itself in light of the rules derived above, Françoise Bottéro remains the rare Western scholar to probe this line of inquiry. Bottéro briefly accounts for Xu Shen's reversal of Ban Gu's first pair:

Ainsi, le fait que Ban Gu et Zheng Zhong présentent, par exemple, les pictogrammes en premier lieu signifie-t-il qu'ils considéraient le graphisme comme débutant par la

représentation du réel, à l'encontre de Xu Shen qui, lui, affirmerait plutôt qu'il aurait débuté dans l'abstrait ... On notera que de ces trois ordres, c'est aujourd'hui celui de Ban Gu qui a été adopté dans la terminologie de Xu Shen, sans que l'on sache la raison d'un tel choix.¹⁴ Les séries ... de Ban Gu et Xu Shen correspondent à des visions différentes de la genèse de l'écriture chinoise chez chacun de ces deux auteurs. Ban Gu propose une évolution "naturelle" des caractères, du plus simple au plus complexe ... Xu Shen, lui, présente une évolution de l'écriture en accord avec la tradition philosophique du *Yijing* et en fonction des mythes de l'époque sur l'écriture. Apparue dans la lignée des hexagrammes et des noeuds de corde, l'écriture joue le même rôle que ceux-ci. Elle est censée représenter la totalité des choses de l'univers, et en même temps garder la trace du passé.¹⁵

Bottéro notices how Ban Gu's conception, adopted without explanation by the majority of Chinese scholars, seems "natural," and attributes the oddity of Xu Shen's ordering to his indebtedness to the philosophy of the *Change* and mythical frameworks current at the time. Indeed, the very etymology of 'abstraction,' whose literal meaning of 'to draw away from' is copied onto the modern Chinese term 抽象 (extracted image), makes it literally impossible for abstraction, Bottéro's equivalent of 'indicating event,' to come before representation. The etymology is not accidental. Most readers in China and the West would agree that abstract qualities are derived from concrete things. There are first things, and then one speaks of their qualities. To employ 'abstraction' in reference to Xu Shen's first principle requires the word to be used in a sense opposed both to its etymology and established usage. Xu Shen's abstraction is not derived from things, on the contrary, it is the source from which things originate. Moreover, by rendering Xu Shen's initial two principles as abstraction and representation, Bottéro links the discussion on the six principles to the passionate debate on the relationship between the two basic modes of conceptualization that, particularly in reference to "primitive" art and child development, raged through Western academies in mid-20th century, thereby opening tempting possibilities for an interpreter looking to expand on the significance of Xu Shen's reversal.

¹⁴ Bottéro (1996) p. 53.

¹⁵ Bottéro (1998) p. 184.

Rather than to follow this enticing but treacherously unfounded path, I shall hinge my rationalization of Xu Shen's ordering on the reckoning of its rare modern Chinese exponent, the Qing philosopher Dai Zhen 戴震:

班鄭二家雖可以廣異聞而綱領之正宜從許氏 (六書論序 戴東原集 卷三 十五頁)
劉班 ... 鄭 ... 所言各乖異失倫 ... 大致造字之始無所馮依宇宙閒事與形兩大端而已指其事之實曰指事一二上下是也象其形之大體曰象形日月水火是也文字既立則聲寄於字而字有可調之聲意寄於字而字有可通之意是又文字之兩大端也因而博衍之取乎聲諧曰諧聲聲不諧而會合其意曰會意四者書之體止此矣由是之於用數字共一用者如初哉首基之皆爲始 ... 其義轉相爲注曰轉注一字具數用者依於義以引伸依於聲而旁寄假此以施於彼曰假借所以用文字者斯其兩大端也六者之次第出於自然立法歸於易簡震所以信許叔重論六書必有師承而考老二字以說文證說文可不復疑也 (答江慎修先生論小學書 戴東原集 卷三 十四頁)

Although Ban Gu's and Zheng Zhong's lines of scholarship may broaden one's knowledge, for the correct blueprint it is appropriate to follow Xu Shen. ...

The theories of Liu Xin, Ban Gu, and Zheng Zhong contradict each other and lack in logic. Generally speaking, characters were originally conceived relying on the two great poles of the universe, namely events and things. Indicating the substance of an event is termed 'indicating event.' 'One and two,' 'up and down' exemplify the case. Mimicking the bulk of a shape is termed 'mimicking shape.' 'Sun and Moon,' 'water and fire' exemplify the case. Once the written form is established, sound is entrusted to the character, consequently the character has a sound to which it can be attuned. Intention is also entrusted to the character, consequently intention can be understood from the character. These are the two great ingredients of script. Relying on these two and broadening them, a character either seizes on the aspect of harmonizing the sound, in which case it is termed 'harmonizing sound,' or it combines the intentions, in which case it is termed 'combining intentions.' The form of the script is completed by these four principles.

Now as for usage, the principle by which a number of characters is used in the same way, for example when edge, start, head, foundation all express beginning, this meaning oscillating between the mutually explanatory terms, is termed 'convergence.' The principle by which a single character is used in different ways, either by relying on meaning extension or on the rebus principle, is termed 'divergence.' These are the two great poles of character usage.

The order of the six principles arises from nature, in order to establish a theory one returns to ease and simplicity. Further reasons why I trust Xu Shen are that he must have received this theory from an earlier line of teachers and that by relying on "old; greyed septuagenarian" and "long-lived; deceased ancestor" [Xu Shen's two examples of convergence] one is corroborating Xu Shen's theory on the basis of his own book. (Dai Zhen, 1934a, 3:14)

By stripping Liu Xin's ordering of reason Dai Zhen sets himself apart from virtually all Qing and 20th century scholars who consider Ban Gu's conception as the more

logical.¹⁶ According to Dai Zhen, Xu Shen's ordering is alone rational because it models the two basic principles of graph formation on the two constituents of the universe, namely events and things. Events, i.e., general concepts such as upper and lower, come before individual things like the Sun and the Moon. Since general concepts such as upper and lower are indicative of relations, Dai Zhen implies here that the mind first perceives a relation and only subsequently becomes cognizant of the entities between which relation obtains. This particular observation about the cognitive process translates into a pair of strategies entailed in interpreting a phenomenon. Taking the Chinese character as an example, the first strategy, matching the level of events, consists in identifying the key relation of which the particular character is expressive. The second strategy, corresponding to the level of entities, rests on separating the character from its web of meanings and analyzing it individually with regard to singular reference. Analytical method, the backbone of science, is acknowledged but subordinated to the relational approach, the vehicle of poets.

Dai Zhen illustrates these two strategies in his description of the way in which graphs express meaning. First, a graph is matched with a pronunciation. This emphasis on phonetic property is consonant with the governing principle of Dai Zhen's philological work, namely, that the sound of a character is paramount to meaning, pronunciation being a character's duct to a network of relations expressed by the words of language. Second, intention is detected in the manner of the graph's depiction. This extra linguistic property connects the graph to an actuality located in the cognitive frame. The act of reading

¹⁶ Zhang Taiyan 章太炎, one of the few scholars to echo the nuanced aspects of Dai Zhen's presentation, distinguishes between the first two principles in the following way: "指事尙狀辭動辭之別而象形多爲名詞 Pointing an event focuses on the distinction between verbs and adverbs, while mimicking a shape mostly expresses nouns." Rather than employing Bottéro's terminology of "abstract and representational," Zhang Taiyan specifies the distinction as concerning "general vs. concrete" or "(ad)verb vs. noun."

proceeds from sound to vision, from words to perception, from relations to objects.

Pronunciation, the spoken language, is matched with the general level of events, intention, contained in the written record, is tallied with the concrete level of things.¹⁷

Dai Zhen's prioritizing of the sound of a graph over its pictorial intention also informs his preferred ranking of the third and fourth principles: the principle of harmonizing sound, operating primarily through the graph's explicit pronunciation indicating component, precedes the principle of combining intentions, signifying without the mediation of the spoken word. Thus Dai Zhen ties the reversal of Xu Shen's first pair vis-a-vis Ban Gu to the similar swap in the second pair. Since few scholars are attuned to this aspect of Dai Zhen's reasoning, both his followers and critics will locate the weight of his statement in the subsequent paragraph, where Dai Zhen designates the last two principles as pertaining to usage rather than, as had been previously understood, limited to the constitution of characters. The context and the implication of Dai Zhen's subdivision of the six principles are drawn out by his student Duan Yucai 段玉裁:

六書者文字聲音義理之總匯也有指事象形形聲會意而字形盡於此矣字各有音而聲音盡於此矣有轉注段借而字義盡於此矣異字同義曰轉注異義同字曰段借有轉注而百字可一義也有段借而一字可數義也 (755)

Six principles is the coming together of paleography, phonology, and exegesis. Indicating fact, mimicking a shape, shape and sound, combining intentions: these complete the form of a character. Assigning each character its pronunciation is the task of phonology. Finally, through *zhuanzhu* and *jiajie* the meaning of a character is realized.

¹⁷ In an oral culture, or in a culture where writing functions solely as a sound recording device, details of reference are necessarily conveyed by the spoken word, sense and reference merge in the sound. Words are matched with objects in the realm of perception, basic linguistic units function as analogues of things, and grammatical operations on these units reflect causal links between objects these refer to. Simply put, language acts as the mirror of the world of things. On the other hand, in a culture where graphical record also points directly to reference, the interpretation of the sound of the language is freed to focus on the way in which words relate to each other. Basic units of speech are suggestive of general events rather than concrete things: they constitute the grammar rather than the mirror of phenomena. When spoken words are not regarded as primarily the analogues of things, a language's capacity to match objective properties of cognition comes to rest on information contained in the graphical record. Dai Zhen's conception of language as expressing primarily abstract relations is only feasible in conjunction with a writing system that acts both as "visible speech" and "symbolic notation" capable of direct reference. To pronounce a character is to denote its range of meaning; to analyze a graph is to tell its singular referent.

The phenomenon of different characters sharing the same meaning is called convergence. The phenomenon of different meanings being expressed by the same character is called loan/extension. Through convergence hundred characters may articulate a single meaning. Through loan/extension a single character can occur in countless meanings.

Dai Zhen's differentiation between form and usage enables Duan Yucai to transform six principles into an all-encompassing paradigm of the arts of philology. The initial four principles set the parameters for graphical analysis. The need to assign a pronunciation to a character reflective of more than 2,000 years distant stage of the language necessitates the development of progressively accurate rules of phonology. Finally, the last two principles steer the interplay between the graph's specific intention and general pronunciation toward the ultimate piece of information, the overall meaning of a character. The three disciplines are both in- and inter-dependent. In the first instance, each discipline is governed by its own body of rules. Thus a graph either combines intentions or shape and sound, one character's pronunciation is either related to the sound of another character or it is not, and a gloss either relies on the principle of converging or on the principle of borrowed meanings. There is no space for subjective speculations, the interpreter only makes more or less informed choices between this or that objective criterion. In these choices the interpreter is served by the disciplines' interrelatedness. Thus a specific graphical analysis is corroborated by a particular pronunciation, uncertain pronunciation is calibrated through an obvious reference, while potential meanings are weighed against the character's explicit phonetic property. One discipline functions as the probing stone of the validity of a theory put forward in another field. So far the disciplines' interconnectedness. The distinctiveness of the respective sets of rules governing each discipline in turn avoids circularity of such verification process.

Duan Yucai's need to define the last two principles is, with no definitions attached to the first four principles, conspicuous. Bear in mind that the quoted statement is part of his defining commentary (注), a type of exegesis that limits glosses to moot points of the text. Rather than restating the obvious, as other types of commentaries are prone to do, a defining gloss is a restriction resolving a doubt. Thus the absence of commentary on the first four principles indicates Duan Yucai does not expect his readers to consider these as problematic. On the other hand, the presence of definitions on the last two principles signals that their construal is far from undisputed. Having relied on Dai Zhen for their explanation, Duan Yucai accounts for the controversy surrounding them:

趙宋以後言六書者徇[紕]陝隘不知轉注段借所以包[括]詁訓之全謂六書爲倉頡造字六法說轉注多不可通戴先生曰指事象形形聲會意四者字之體也轉注段借二者字之用也聖人復起不易斯言矣 (755)

Since the Song times the scope of the six arts has become narrowly restricted as scholars no longer comprehended that convergence and divergence were the means of encompassing all exegesis. They took the six arts to refer to the six ways in which Cang Jie fashioned the characters. Consequently, so many conflicting explanations of *zhuanzhu* sprung up that it became impossible to make sense of the term. Then Dai Zhen appeared and declared: "Indicating fact, mimicking shape, shape and sound, combining intentions, these four pertain to the make up of a character. Convergence and loan, these two pertain to how a character is used." Even if another sage were to materialize, he could not change this part.

To buttress his claim that the ambiguity of the last two principles is not inherent, but instead a product of one mistaken interpretation whose influence dates to a particular moment in history, Duan Yucai elsewhere references the Jin 晉 scholar Wei Heng 衛恆, the Tang scholar Jia Gongyan 賈公彥, and the Song scholar Mao Huang 毛晃, all of who, according to Duan Yucai, were correct in their explanation of convergence (756). Duan Yucai's targeting of the insularity of the Song times resonates with his overall assessment of Song learning, which he considers lacking in rigorous methodology, a provocative verdict given that by his time Song learning is still the entrenched orthodoxy that,

through a system of imperial examinations, controls educational curriculum and determines individual success. Of all Dai Zhen's and Duan Yucai's criticisms leveled at Song scholarship, this is the most fundamental one. For, as one will recall, six principles are the means by which seven-year-olds are introduced to writing. By throwing the six principles in disarray, Song scholars undermined the roots of education. Through redefining the six principles and exemplifying them in their work, Dai Zhen and Duan Yucai contest the very notion of what it means to be literate.

Above all, for Dai Zhen and Duan Yucai literacy is not limited to the ability to recognize and to pronounce a written symbol, it includes proficiency in the arts of exegesis, i.e., a systematic understanding of the way in which a word comes to mean what it means. Moreover, in Duan Yucai's elaboration, exegesis guides the disciplines of paleography and phonology. The import of a character is not settled by the weight of an authoritative voice, it is productively channeled by a pair of rules. Since these rules encompass all that pertains to processing texts, every gloss may be classified as converging or extending. Since ancient glosses are of course never explicitly identified in this way, a reader is forced into making choices, each preference carrying its consequences in regard to meaning. Significance is not arbitrary, a matter of context or of interpreter's fancy, it derives from application of specific rules. Paradoxically, the constraint is conducive to innovation. For without clearly defined parameters of the way in which meaning is generated, a challenge to traditional interpretation can only rely on a subjective reading that is unlikely, for its idiosyncratic nature, to be widely accepted by the reading public, typical member of which would rather pursue own creative impulses. The readiness to agree on a common set of rules, on the other hand, creates a community

that, by sharing the same methodological principles, possesses the means of assessing the validity of a hypothesis and of building on one another's work.

For Duan Yucai, Dai Zhen's theory is not only preferable because it makes the six principles a more comprehensive and therefore useful concept, but also because it paves way for scholarly consensus. The narrowness of the Song approach is not problematic just in itself, but also in the effect it has on the explanation of the fifth principle. For once the scope of the six principles is reduced to character constitution, agreement on the connotations of *zhuanzhu* falls out of reach. The feasibility of a shared basis is Duan Yucai's imperative, reflected in his evaluation of the Han theories of the six principles:

鄭眾 ... 所言非其敘劉歆班固 ... 與許大同小異要以劉班許所說爲得其傳蓋有指事象形而後有會意形聲有是四者爲體而後有轉注段借二者爲用戴先生曰六者之次第出於自然是也 (755)

The order of the six principles expounded by Zheng Zhong ... is wrong. Liu Xin and Ban Gu ... are in general agreement with Xu Shen, the difference between them is slight. In order to grasp the correct transmission of the six principles, one must follow Liu, Ban, and Xu. In all probability, you first have indicating fact and mimicking shape and only then there are combining intentions and shaping sound. Having these four finalize form, the convergence-divergence pair takes care of use. When Dai Zhen says: "The order of the six principles is natural," he has this in mind.

Duan Yucai's reluctance to read significance into Ban Gu and Xu Shen's differences is tied with a suggestion he makes a few lines earlier that Xu Shen had not been aware of Ban Gu's conception. For had Xu Shen known Ban Gu's model, he would have needed a reason to change it. If Xu Shen, on the other hand, worked out his conception independently, then Duan Yucai can dismiss the differences between the two scholars as accidental and stress their common points, which, because they have been arrived at independently, are indicative of one underlying model. And, through a similar process of reasoning, Zheng Zhong's ordering is wrong because it is not corroborated by either of the two Han scholars. More likely, however, Duan Yucai dismisses Zheng Zhong's

ordering because in his failure to differentiate between form and function, between four principles of formation and two rules of usage, Zheng Zhong instigates the Song narrowing of the six principles and the resulting methodological bedlam of which Duan Yucai is so critical.

The passage also illustrates how selectively Duan Yucai uses Dai Zhen. While on the one hand he may stress Dai Zhen's form and function dichotomy, the other, more nuanced aspects of Dai Zhen's rationalization of the ordering of the six principles are ignored by Duan Yucai. Or even contradicted, as is the case above with Duan Yucai's combining of Xu Shen's first pair ("you first have indicating fact and mimicking shape") with Ban Gu's second pair ("only then there are combining intentions and shaping sound"). For Dai Zhen such combination is unsound as the order of Xu Shen's first two principles is mirrored by the sequence within the second pair.

Now, to take Dai Zhen's reasoning further, if the orderings of the first two pairs are interconnected, a similar contingency should extend to the third pair. Consequently, Xu Shen's and Ban Gu's agreement on the ordering of the last two principles signals one of two possibilities. Either the two scholars share the same understanding of these two principles, in which case one of them is wrong in his ordering of the first two pairs. Or they understand the last two principles differently, in which case their conceptions are on the whole incompatible. While the second scenario might seem speculative, it is in fact exemplified by the Qing scholars Jiang Shenxiu 江慎修 and Zhu Junsheng 朱駿聲, whose definition of the fifth principle matches Dai Zhen's sixth.

Where Dai Zhen's claim that the order of the six principles springs from nature highlights the exclusivity of Xu Shen's conception, in Duan Yucai's presentation it serves

to posit common ground between Xu Shen and Ban Gu. Rather than treating Dai Zhen's view of the six principles as a comprehensive and closely integrated theory, Duan Yucai builds on one of its features. In doing so, he resigns on the possibility to test the compatibility of Dai Zhen's overall system and to develop his theoretical framework. As the last sentence of the passage demonstrates, Duan Yucai is all too happy to have found in Dai Zhen a modern day sage capable of laying down a common ground for a generation of scholars than to want to undermine the now possible collective project with undue criticism.

I have retraced Duan Yucai's take on Dai Zhen in detail because it is through Duan Yucai's mediation that most readers today become familiar with Dai Zhen's views on the six principles. Leaving Duan Yucai's peculiar interpretation of his master aside, let us follow the reasoning that led Dai Zhen to his influential subdivision.

As the previous quotations intimated, convergence has long been the Achilles's heel of the six principles theory. Cao Renhu 曹仁虎 articulates the prevailing perception stating:

六書中惟轉注之義古來說者判不相合約有數家¹⁸

Among the six principles, it is only in regard to the significance of *zhuanzhu* that judgements of interpreters, past and present, are incompatible, forming into numerous schools.

Cao Renhu's encapsulation illustrates the dominant analytical mode in scholarship on the six principles. Rather than seeing the principles as interconnected, most scholars treat each in isolation. Consequently, disagreement may be restricted to *zhuanzhu*, in some cases extended to the other member of the final pair *jiatie*, while consensus reigns in regard to the remaining principles.

¹⁸ In Ding Fubao (1932) 3:189.4.

It may be practical to introduce here few details in regard to convergence. In his Postscript, Xu Shen defines the fifth principle as: "建類一首同意相受考老是也 establish a category heading, characters sharing the same intention explain each other. Venerable: deceased father and old: greyed septuagenarian exemplify the case." Scholars tend to base new theories of convergence on Xu Shen's example. Some argue that the 考 graph revolves to the left, while the 老 graph turns to the right (左迴右轉), others claim that the 老 component is added to 丂, a graph used in bronze inscriptions to denote the sense later carried by 考. Dai Zhen counters these and many other speculations with the plain observation that in the body of his dictionary Xu Shen analyzes 考 in a way indicative of his conceiving the graph as 'shaping sound' and explains 老 as 'combining intentions.' In other words, the two graphs are evidently formed on the basis of Xu Shen's third and fourth principles respectively. If the framework of the six principles outlined in the Postscript is to be consistent with the body of the dictionary, the examples 考 and 老 cannot be taken as illustrating a principle of character constitution. Thus Xu Shen's entries on 考 and 老 lead Dai Zhen to the division of the six principles into four principles pertaining to constitution and two principles concerning usage. Since the argument is based on the evidence of Xu Shen's examples, the form/function division is attested only for his conception. Duan Yucai's extending of the division to Ban Gu lacks such textual support.

Dai Zhen's explanation of convergence is based on the type of reasoning he describes as "corroborating Xu Shen's theory with his own book." Of the three Han conceptions of the six principles the procedure's application is limited to Xu Shen for, although some

readers may find Ban Gu's or Zheng Zhong's orderings of the six principles preferable, neither scholar has left behind a body of material against which details of their tersely formulated theories can be verified. True, Xu Shen's definitions have also been criticized as laconic. The objection, however, ceases to be warranted the moment one treats the body of Xu Shen's dictionary as the application of the six principles.¹⁹ If the definitions and examples given in the Postscript are not sufficient to settle the case, the interpreter has 9,353 entries to draw on. Consequently, a scholar looking for a fully articulated Han conception of the six principles inevitably turns to Xu Shen, while a researcher aspiring to put forth a new theory exploits the indeterminacy of his rivals.

Dai Zhen begins his explanation of why he prefers a reconstructed Han conception over a later theory with the admission that the entries preserved in Xu Shen's dictionary and in the even older *Approaching Standard* 爾雅 glossary were composed only after the ancient practice of philology had long been lost. Consequently, many entries featured in the two works, acknowledges Dai Zhen, do not concur with ancient usage. Nevertheless, these aberrances should not prevent one from regarding the two works as genuine heirs to an uninterrupted line of transmission. Although Zhou philology was not practiced in its totality during the intervening centuries, some of its aspects continued to be handed down from teacher to student until being recorded, alongside later interpolations, in the two main lexicographical works completed during the Han.

The argument is part of Dai Zhen's overall approach to classical heritage. Classical texts, according to Dai Zhen, are matchless as repositories of the way of the ancient sages that can only be recovered through accurate understanding of their words, or more

¹⁹ This is one pole in the spectrum of *Shuowen* interpretations. The other pole considers Xu Shen's account of the six principles to be of antiquarian interest only, bearing no relation whatsoever to the body of his work.

precisely, characters that record these words. His emphasis on hard evidence and its rigorous interpretation is directed at the hermeneutical principle of heart-to-heart communication used by Song scholars to contest the authority of Han classical commentaries. Instead of relying on the directives of Han exegetes, the Song interpreter believed he could recover the intention of the sages directly from the words of the classics. Needless to say, Song scholars did not arrive at their interpretations haphazardly, their search for new meaning was accompanied by novel interpretative strategies. Dai Zhen is not entirely opposed to this trend, after all, he will continue to favor Cheng Yi's 程頤 interpretation of the *Change* over the essentially Han rooted analysis of Wang Bi 王弼.²⁰ Nevertheless, his fundamental disagreement with the main tenets of Song philosophy leads him to question the hermeneutical principles that produced them. Consider the grounds for Dai Zhen's rejection of Song definitions of two key philosophical terms:

如程子朱子論中心爲忠如心爲恕猶失六書之本法岐惑學者
When Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi theorize that "Loyalty (忠) is to center (中) the mind (心); empathy (恕) is to liken (如) the mind (心)," they miss the method underlying the six principles and lead scholars astray.²¹

Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi are objectively off the mark because they violate the six principles. The violation consists in their analyzing the two characters, both indisputably formed as shaping sound, as if they were combining intentions. Incidentally, Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi's rationalization is faithfully reproduced in Anne Cheng's influential introduction to Chinese philosophy.²² Rather tellingly, Cheng presents these two

²⁰ 先生言周易當讀程子易傳 段玉裁 戴氏年譜 In Dai Zhen (1934a) Chronology p. 25.

²¹ 答江慎修先生論小學書 Dai Zhen (1934a) 3:13.

²² Cheng (2006) p. 59.

interpretations in the context of her discussion of the *Analects* without crediting Cheng and Zhu, as if they constituted the actual meanings of the two terms in the thought of Confucius rather than a later age way of developing them.

Since to replace Song strategies with modern techniques would be tantamount to repeating the Song mistake, Dai Zhen returns to Han theories of exegesis. The reason why these can singularly lead to accurate understanding of the words of the sages is because they had been designed by these same sages. Dai Zhen's faith that the Way of the Sages can be recovered and used to reform his distorted culture rests on the supposition that the classical texts did not reach the Han period, during which their form was finalized, in isolation but accompanied by a set, even if incomplete, of tools uniquely suited for decoding their meaning. Significantly, the belief in inseparability of textual and exegetical traditions down to the Han shifts the discussion of interpretatorial accuracy from meaning to means. The validity of a particular explanation is not just measured against the ever-shifting criterion of factual plausibility, but, more importantly, by the degree to which it conforms to Han rules of interpretation. To understand the words of the classics accurately is to read them through the ears of the Han exegete. For Dai Zhen, *Approaching Standard* and Xu Shen are the acme of ancient hermeneutics, the first acting as the time honored repository of individual glosses (儒者治經宜自爾雅始²³ 爾雅六經之通釋也²⁴), the second faithfully preserving the essential exegetical paradigm (先秦已上凡古籍之存者 ... 本之六書²⁵).

²³ 爾雅注疏箋補序 In Dai Zhen (1934a) 3:1.

²⁴ 爾雅文字考序 Ibid. 3:2.

²⁵ 爾雅注疏箋補序 Ibid. 3:1.

Being based on an ancient line of transmission is the first reason Dai Zhen gives for his trusting Xu Shen. However, even stronger claim could be staked for Ban Gu's and Zheng Zhong's conceptions, afterall, both are documented before Xu Shen's. In a predicament where it is impossible to verify uninterrupted transmission against textual evidence, Dai Zhen chooses Xu Shen's over rival theories because of its "ease and simplicity," terms taken from the "Commentary on Appended Verbalizations" where they are deployed to describe the respective functioning of *qian* 乾 and *kun* 坤, the two principles through which Change operates. Just as is the case with Change, ease and simplicity is the dual feature indicative of a theory's rootedness in the natural order of things. Dai Zhen's reasoning here reveals a firm confidence -- astonishing to a follower of Song learning -- in the human ability to discern spontaneity and to make informed choices on the basis of this discernment, the foundation of his highly original philosophy.

Whether it is diverging accounts of the six principles or conflicting glosses on key terms, Han scholarship does not present modern interpreter with a ready made path to meaning. Instead, the reader is forced to weigh each theory against his naturally endowed sense of simplicity. Only ancient sages could create with ease, later ages diluted their work with tortuous craft. Even if unable to genuinely create, the modern man possesses in his sense for spontaneity a compass to steer him to the creation of sages, avoiding later adumbrations. Measured against Liu Xin's, the ease of Xu Shen's theory hinges on the prominence afforded to abstraction.

Dai Zhen's perception of Han works as a mixture of received, genuine knowledge and of strained interpretations churned to fill gaps is further illustrated by this comment:

漢人之書就一書中有師承可據者有失傳傳會者說文於字體字訓罅漏不免其論六書則不失師承 (答江慎修先生論小學書 In Dai Zhen, 1934a, 3:12)

Any book of Han scholarship contains both dependable information received from a line of teachers and addenda forced to fit where the transmission had been lost. Although the *Shuowen* cannot avoid fissures in regard to elucidation of form and meaning of individual characters, in discussing the six principles it maintains its link with the line of teachers.

Dai Zhen's regarding the best in Han scholarship as a faithful reproduction of ancient theories rather than as a creative innovation has two consequences. First, it does not allow for the possibility that Xu Shen's conception was formulated in response to and as a deliberate improvement on the two earlier documented theories. For Dai Zhen, there was no Han debate on the six principles. The three conceptions are results of independent lines of scholarship, only one able to claim to be genuinely descended from ancient sages. To draw connections between the three theories is to risk missing the distinctive purpose of each. Second, since a valid theory is a continuation of a single legitimate line of transmission, earlier works considered belonging to the same tradition must be based on an identical set of principles.

Dai Zhen's definition of convergence conforms with this attitude. Afterall, the example Dai Zhen gives to illustrate his definition, i.e., "when edge, start, head, foundation, all express beginning," is taken straight from the opening entry of *Approaching Standard*, the lexicon Dai Zhen holds up as the fountainhead of classical exegesis. Thus Dai Zhen does not counter the farfetched interpretations of convergence with a new theory but with a documented ancient practice that he sees as belonging to the same genuine tradition.

Dai Zhen's back-to-tradition method of resolving convergence, however, is not immune to criticism based on similar fidelity to Han sources. Zhang Taiyan objects that:

迨乾嘉諸儒始究心音讀訓詁但又誤以說文爾雅爲一類段氏玉裁詆漢志入爾雅於孝經類入倉頡篇於小學類謂分類不當（國學網點 已故大師 章太炎 小學略說）

By the end of the 18th century, classicists finally began to exert themselves in using phonology to practice exegesis. But they mistook *Explaining the Graphs* and *Approaching*

Standard as being of the same kind. Duan Yucui, for one, maligned Ban Gu for his categorization of the *Approaching Standard* under the heading of Classic of Filial Piety and of the *Cang Jie Chapters* under the rubric of Philology in the "Treatise on Arts and Letters," calling this division inappropriate.

In order to understand Zhang Taiyan's objection three things need to be kept in mind.

First, both Ban Gu and Xu Shen link six principles to the practice of Philology (小學).

Second, Xu Shen's postscript discusses in detail the *Cang Jie Chapters* and the tradition of character repertories evolving from it, without ever mentioning the *Standard*. Third, Ban Gu divides the opening section of his "Treatise on Arts and Letters" into nine segments: the first six, corresponding to the Classical Arts, are followed by the three auxiliary parts of Analects, Classic of Filial Piety, and Philology. By including the *Standard* in the Classic of Filial Piety section and by listing the *Cang Jie* in the Philology division, Ban Gu insinuates the two works belong to different genres. Since Xu Shen evidently places his composition in the genus of the *Cang Jie*, following Ban Gu's categorization, his work falls into a class different from the *Standard*. Thus to view the two lexicons as part of the same tradition, the premise underlying Dai Zhen's definition of convergence, contravenes Ban Gu's classification. Acutely aware of this potential lapse in logic, Duan Yucui, who interprets vast majority of Xu Shen's glosses through the lense of Dai Zhen's convergence,²⁶ counters that Ban Gu was wrong in drawing his divisions.

In contrast, Zhang Taiyan upholds Ban Gu's distinctions and uses them to argue that Dai Zhen's definition violates an established Han classification, thereby criticizing Dai Zhen through his own back-to-the-Han method. Having invalidated the grounds of Dai Zhen's theory, Zhang Taiyan voices the substance of his objection: Dai Zhen's definition of convergence is too broad. While words under the *Standard* entry of 'beginning' may

²⁶ 許氏解字多用轉注 (2)

share the same general meaning, their referents differ (始義雖同所指各異). Since graphs are formed with a specific referent in mind, the principle governing word lexicon cannot be applied to a character repertory. "Head refers to the launch of a man's life, foundation refers to the incipience of an edifice, even if later ages merge these two, at the time of their conception both graphs had different meanings which absolutely cannot be used interchangeably 首爲生人之初基爲築室初雖後世混用造字時亦各有各義決不可混用也."

Rather than rejecting Dai Zhen's theory Zhang Taiyan narrows its scope. Combining definitions of several scholars who all build on Xu Shen's two examples of convergence, Zhang Taiyan encapsulates his own view of convergence as:

說文於義同音同部首同者必聯綿屬綴此許君之微意也 (Ibid.)

Explaining the Graphs holds that considerations of same meaning, same pronunciation, and same cognitive radical must all be tied together, that is, in fact, Xu Shen's 'subtle intention.'

Dai Zhen's synonym criterion heads Zhang Taiyan's list, supplanted by considerations of pronunciation and cognitive categorization. While sharing the same cognitive domain indicator is regarded by Zhang Taiyan as optional feature, similarity of pronunciation constitutes the essential aspect of convergence. Zhang Taiyan acknowledges his debt here to Liu Taigong's 劉台拱 "Essay on Six Principles" (論六書), which similarly begins its characterization of convergence with Dai Zhen's *Standard* derived definition. This is taken to correspond to the second part of Xu Shen's formula, namely, "words sharing the same intention explain each other 同意相受." The first part of Xu Shen's expression, i.e., "establish a single category 建類一首," on the other hand, is taken by Liu Taigong to refer to cognate relationship (同一語原之謂也). Zhang Taiyan outlines the reasoning behind Liu Taigong's argument:

同一語原出生二字考與老二字同訓聲復疊韻古來語言不齊因地轉變此方稱老彼此曰考此方造老彼處造考故有考老二文造字之初本各地同時並興舉太史采集異文各地兼收欲通四方之語故立轉注一項是可知轉注之義實與方言有關 (Ibid.)

The same linguistic source gives rise to two characters. *Kao* (long-lived; deceased ancestor) and *lao* (old; greyed septuagenarian) are interpreted the same, moreover, their pronunciations rhyme. Past and present, language is uneven, shifting according to place. In one place they say *lao*, in another place they say *kao*, in one place they create the character 老, in another place they create the character 考, thus there are the two graphs 考 and 老. The initial creation of characters took place at the same time in different places. Grand Scribes collected different graphs, gathering them from each and every place. Wanting to link up the languages of the four quarters they established the heading of convergence. Hence one knows that the significance of convergence really has to do with dialects.

Zhang Taiyan buttresses Liu Taigong's explanation with two further examples of dialect based difference of vocabulary (袒裼裸裎 and 汪汙潢湖).²⁷ Approaching lexicography as primarily the study of and the drawing together of diverse dialectical usages has an indigenous precedent, namely Liu Xiang's compilation *Dialects* 方言. Ironically, it was Dai Zhen's text critical commentary (方言疏證) that brought this other rare preserved work of Han lexicography into modern focus. Now critiquing Dai Zhen, Zhang Taiyan comes to regard Xu Shen's dictionary as informed by a similar set of issues that motivated Liu Xiang's composition. Thus once again following Dai Zhen's back-to-the-Han method, Zhang Taiyan argues that, rather than through the lens of the *Standard*, convergence should be seen through the prism of the *Dialects*. From here derives the larger role convergence comes to play in Zhang Taiyan's analysis of the functioning of a linguistic system:

古者方國不同意猶相通造字之初非一人一地所專各地各造倉頡采而爲之總裁 ... 轉注在文字中乃重要之關鍵使全國語言彼此相喻不統一而自統一轉注之功也今人稱歐洲語同出羅馬而各國音亦小異此亦有轉注之理在 (Ibid.)

In the past, countries and states were not the same. Their intents, however, were more or less compatible. Characters were not created by one person in one place, instead each area fashioned its own characters. Cang Jie collected these and became the Chief Imperial Compiler. ... Convergence lies at the very heart of writing, it allows for all of the empire's languages to be mutually intelligible, even if they were not initially unified, convergence

²⁷ Excerpted from his 國故論衡.

links them into one interconnected system. The view today that European languages stem from Latin, each country's pronunciation constituting only a slight variation, is also underlied by the logic of convergence.

In the critical period during which writing was formed, China, according to Zhang Taiyan, consisted of independent polities that differed, among other things, in their manner of speaking. Despite differences, however, these states shared an underlying worldview, consequently the purpose to which they put their respective languages was the same. Being principally a record of the spoken language, writing came to reflect the differences. Imperial Grand Scribes beginning with Cang Jie were in charge of compiling characters used in the four quarters into repertories for writing instruction. Since these compilations reflected different dialects which made many of their characters unintelligible to a reader versed in a single idiom, scribes invented the principle of convergence. By the means of convergence, connection is established between words stemming from distinct languages. Linguistic unity, or, common linguistic source, is not a given for Zhang Taiyan, it is fashioned by the scribes through convergence. Significantly, by insisting on similarity of pronunciation, Zhang Taiyan limits the scope of convergence to languages stemming from the same family, or, to use another terminology, dialects of the same language.

The restriction reflects a premise that fundamentally separates Zhang Taiyan from Duan Yucai. By employing the broad criterion of synonymicity, or, to put it coarsely, identity of referent, Duan Yucai makes it possible for convergence to bring together even unrelated languages. Retracing Duan Yucai's view to its point of departure, all languages share the same intentions, i.e., they describe the same world. The identity of referential frame is sufficient to create a link between words even if they come from isolated linguistic systems. In contrast, Zhang Taiyan intimates initial plurality of worlds shaped

by distinct languages. Two words are allowed to converge not simply when their meanings are related, but, more importantly, when their pronunciation can also be shown, by recourse to the rules governing phonological change that Zhang Taiyan, due to the cumulative researches of Qing evidential scholars, newly has at his disposal, to have evolved from the same source. Unity is not realized through a shared referential frame, it is forged by the scribes through the positing of a common word ancestor.

Where Zhang Taiyan defines the cognate method as the converging of apparently disparate words and entities, Lu Zongda 陸宗達, a pupil of Zhang Taiyan's student Huang Kan 黃侃, approaches the same cognate phenomenon from the opposite direction:

爲從某一語源派生的新詞製造新字這是漢字發展的一條重要法則也就是轉注²⁸
To create a novel character for a new word that has split off from a particular linguistic source is an important rule governing the development of Chinese characters. That, in fact, is diffusion.

Rather than from initial disparity of words and phenomena, Lu Zongda begins from their common source. Instead of forging unity, the scribe follows the essentially diverging forces of language. When this outward drive produces a new word, the scribe, without losing touch with the original word source, fashions a novel character. Differentiation takes place on the level of spoken language, writing copies this verbal process. Where many scholars see the relationship between characters (字) and words (詞) of the Chinese language as problematic, for Lu Zongda characters and words stand in a precise one-to-one relationship. To study the development of Chinese writing is to investigate the evolution of Chinese language.

Lu Zongda identifies three ways in which new words/characters are formed. In the first scenario, which follows, albeit in the opposite direction, Zhang Taiyan's reasoning

²⁸ Lu Zongda (1981) pp. 58-9.

outlined above, geographical and temporal differences produce changes in the sound of a language. Since a word pronounced differently ceases to be the same word, a character is devised to record the new word/pronunciation. In the second, more common scenario, social progress gives rise to new situations. As an existing concept is fitted into novel circumstances, it partakes in their distinctiveness and splinters into new words. The logic of this Lu Zongda's prototypical case is illustrated by his following recapitulation:

綜上所述，可以斷定"說"，"閱"，"稅"，三字同出一個語源，其詞義的核心都是數。只是由於數數兒這個意義用於三種不同的情況，因而產生了三個義項，也可以說是一個語詞因社會制度，文化，科學的發展變化而派生為三個不同的語詞，並因而製造了說閱稅三個字。(Lu Zongda, 1981, pp. 57-8.)

From what I have described one may conclude that the three characters 說, 閱, and 稅 originate from one linguistic source, the core of their word meaning is in each case 'number;' only because 'counting; number' this one meaning comes to be used in three different situations, three semantic headings are generated. One may say that one word, because of society's systemic, cultural, and scientific progress and transformation, splits into three different words, creating alongside the three characters 說, 閱, and 稅.

While in describing the first two situations Lu Zongda limits himself to the level of linguistic operations, in the account of the highly peculiar third scenario he discloses the ontological basis for the essentially diverging processes through which language develops:

一切事物都包含着矛盾的兩方面，並由此而推動事物的發展；詞匯，詞義的發展也符合這個法則。這就是說，客觀事物的矛盾性必然要反映到語言上來，因而產生了詞的界說和概念的差異，由一個語源可以發展成為兩個互相對立的詞。例如"天"與"地"，"古"與"今"，"男"與"女"，"始"與"終"，等等，都是兩兩居于對立面的詞，而這些對立面的詞又都是雙聲，可見是由同一語源派生的。這在語源學上稱為"相反同根"。(Ibid. p. 62)

All things contain two contradictory facets by which their development is spurred; the expansion of vocabulary and word meanings also matches this rule. That is to say, the objectively contradictory nature of things must have also been reflected onto language, giving rise to differences in the particular definition as well as general conception of a word, from one linguistic source there may develop two mutually opposed words. For example "heaven" and "earth", "past" and "present", "male" and "female", "beginning" and "end", etc., all are pairs of mutually antagonistic words. Since all these antonyms alliterate, it can be seen they have split off from a single linguistic source. In the field of etymology this is termed "contraries sharing root."

By splitting from a single source, language development matches the differentiation process of phenomena. Entities are objectively comprised of contraries. The interplay of

constitutive oppositions underlies a thing's evolution, while its continuation is ensured by their inseparability. The way things exist in the world is matched by the manner in which words relate in a language. The coincidence of several antonyms of the Chinese language sharing initials is not simply indicative of a particular linguistic interpretation of the world but rather of the way things really are. Just as the development of characters reflects the evolution of the Chinese language, so language mirrors the progress of phenomena. Language is not an instrument of human interpretation, it denotes relations obtaining objectively. In other words, Lu Zongda believes that things exist in the world in a way that is independent of a particular interpretation, language represents rather than interprets things. A cognate relationship signals a link on the level of objects, to trace such a relationship is to bring to light a connection that exists independently of human perception. On the other hand, Lu Zongda warns against forcing a link onto words that are not underlied by such an objective connection:

至於這又聲音可通而絕緣無證佐的名物決不可強求其源否則訓詁就會流於隨意性陷入主觀唯心論的述境 釋名 (Ibid. p. 98)

When it comes to names and entities that, on the one hand, are related in pronunciation but, on the other hand, have their connection cut off by virtue of it not being corroborated by evidence, one absolutely may not forcibly seek their common source. Otherwise exegesis could veer into wishful thinking, it could fall into the realm of subjectivism and idealism. ...Just like the *Exposition of Names*.

Exegesis is a science rather than art, relations obtain between phenomenal entities and linguistic units irrespective of the way humans interpret these. Similarity of pronunciation is significant only if it traces the process of linguistic differentiation or if it reflects a real world link, otherwise it is merely a deceptive coincidence. For Lu Zongda, linguistic material is inherently structured, the science of etymology consists in bringing to light these implicit configurations. In contrast, the "subjectivist" approach epitomized by the late Eastern Han compilation of punning glosses *Explaining Names* regards the

similarity of sound not as a reflection of but as the source of structure. Where Lu Zongda treats cognates as archaeological evidence, in other words, as pieces that allow one to reconstruct the historical development of a culture through its language, the *Explanation of Names*, in Lu Zongda's view, uses the perception of sound similarity as the protean basis for the creation of new, merely subjective connections.

For Lu Zongda exegesis is tantamount to historical linguistics. His diachronic method is prefigured by the ancient scribe who never loses historical awareness, keenly following the evolution of language with his characters engendering brush. While the ancient scribe, applying diffusion, moves forward in time, the modern linguist, tracing cognate relationships, moves in the opposite direction.

By equating Ban Gu's and Xu Shen's fifth principle with cognate relationship Lu Zongda continues the line of scholarship pioneered by Liu Taigong and Zhang Taiyan. When it comes to the function of the cognate principle, however, he parts with his predecessors. Where Zhang Taiyan regards Xu Shen's last two principles as pertaining to the way in which an already formed character is used, Lu Zongda revisits Ban Gu's idea of treating the six principles as concerning script formation. Where Zhang Taiyan sees scribes as collectors and organizers, Lu Zongda treats them as creators of script. For Zhang Taiyan convergence opens connections between languages of the same family, for Lu Zongda diffusion maps the evolution of one language as recorded by its script.

Although for Lu Zongda the starting four principles are sufficient to describe the structure of Chinese characters, they need to be underlied by the closing two. These govern whether, when a novel reality appears, a new character is created (diffusion) or the meaning of an existing character is extended (containment). Thus while temporal and

geographical aspects of cognate theory are certainly interconnected, prioritizing one over the other leads to contrasting vantage points. Where Zhang Taiyan's scribe-the-organizer, looking at language synchronically, perceives spatial diversity out of which, through convergence, he forges linguistic unity, Lu Zongda's scribe-the-inventor, conscious of acting diachronically, fashions characters as cues for the historical linguist, who uses them to trace word families to their source.

Despite their innovative inputs, Zhang Taiyan and Lu Zongda would both be considered traditional in their approach to Chinese language and writing. For they develop their respective theories from a time honored framework. In recent decades, however, this attitude of preserving continuity with the past has been pushed aside by a trend to shed the constraints of tradition. In the study of Chinese writing this radical break, sanctioned by the perceived superiority of modern vantage point, is epitomized by Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭, the most widely quoted authority on the subject in mainland China and the West.

Qiu Xigui begins his treatment of the ancient framework by declaring that in its original *Rituals of Zhou* context, "six writings" referred to a primer for children comprising a set of commonly used characters. Since it is inconceivable that a seven-year-old could comprehend a complex theory like the six principles, what had originally been a rudimentary teaching tool was only reinvented as a theoretical basis for conceiving characters by Han scholiasts. These creative minds used the *Rituals of Zhou* quotation as a ploy in an attempt to dress their systemic changes in the authoritative garb of antiquity (托古改制). It is with scholars like Liu Xin that the study of Chinese writing begins in earnest, for although writing existed and developed prior to the Han, it had not

been a subject of methodical reflection. Having initiated a field of study, Han scholars could have hardly mastered it. The task was left to the moderns who, apart from superior methods and resources, benefited from two millenia of research on the subject. Consequently, it became preferable to replace the outdated Han framework with a new paradigm, such as Tang Lan's 唐蘭 1930's "three principles theory 三書說".

Qiu Xigui's indifference to subtleties of ancient theory is easily seen in the conclusion to his rundown of the nine most influential interpretations of the elusive fifth principle:

我們認為在今天研究漢字根本不用去管轉注這個術語。不講轉注完全能夠把漢字的構造講清楚。(Qiu Xigui, 1996, p. 102)

We think that researching Chinese characters today it is absolutely unnecessary to care about the term *zhuanzhu*. For even without discussing *zhuanzhu*, it is entirely possible to clarify the structure of Chinese characters.

Qiu Xigui's confident discarding of the *zhuanzhu* principle is not accompanied by the corresponding dismissal of the other principles, which Qiu Xigui, along with Tang Lan's theory, continues to employ in character analysis throughout his book. This eclectic use of the past tradition is problematic, for it separates aspects of that tradition from structures through which they were handed down and then marshals these, what are now considered, facts into new configurations. The approach is facilitated by analytical method: to the dissecting mind, which in the case of the six principles veers to breaking individual principles into further subdivisions,²⁹ shades of understanding of one principle do not affect the conceptualization of the rest. Consequently, Qiu Xigui may go as far as to exclude one of the principles, whose usefulness is put into question by the diverging interpretations it has inspired over the centuries.

²⁹ E.g., "假借之例九轉注之例十有二焉 there are nine subdivisions of loan and twelve subdivisions of convergence." In Ding Fubao (1932) 3:201.4. Similarly, *ibid.* 3:220.2, 3:222.4.

The bewildering disparity of opinions in regard to *zhuanzhu* may well be the reason behind Qiu Xigui's rejection of the term. A captive of the positivist age, Qiu Xigui aspires to present an objective outline of Chinese writing. Confronted with a term whose explanation entails a choice rather than specification, Qiu Xigui stands on the verge of losing his treasured mantle of a detached observer. He averts the disconcerting possibility with the strongly worded claim that out of the six principles the fifth alone is dispensable. Provided Qiu Xigui culminates the analytical tradition of six principles' interpretation here, his assertion may well serve as the departure point for someone aspiring to return to the Han relational approach. For if, to the dissecting mind, the fifth principle lacks inherent utility, the moment six principles are regarded as primarily interconnected, this vacant notion is brought into focus as the likely place where the precise nature of the framework's constitutive relations is revealed.

Even if this essay approaches Xu Shen's *Analyzing Characters by means of Explaining the Graphs*, the ancient work containing the fullest elaboration as well as application of the six principles, from various angles, these are all chosen to advance aspects of a particular interpretation of convergence. My method in illuminating this unique phenomenon that, as I contend, underlies the practice of Han philology and its present day descendant, the persistent use of Han characters to render Chinese, is through and through contextual. I interpret convergence in relation to the other five principles, which I in turn embed in the argument of Xu Shen's Postscript, itself a statement of purpose for a tightly weaved network of strategies used in ordering the world through writing. Both the Postscript and the body of the work contain references that, used cautiously, allow one to situate Xu Shen vis-à-vis his contemporaries and make sense of

his project. Although striving to root my interpretation in a genuine Han conception of linguistic arts, I do not claim, like the emblematic contextual critic, exclusivity for my construal. As the above discussion has repeatedly highlighted, in working with Han materials one often faces a choice between alternatives. Thus someone with a different set of preferences could arrive at another, historically just as valid picture of Xu Shen and/or the six principles.

My defense of exegetical diversity, however, does not imply I shrink from peer criticism or advocate philosophical relativism. On the contrary. Precisely because interpretation entails choices, because it is the unfolding of an indefinite, productive concept rather than the impartial restatement of what was "once meant," the interpreter has to follow through with the contextual method and apply it also to herself, not just to her material as is often done today. Historical plausibility, i.e., the degree to which one's account conforms to Han materials and the methods contained therein, is a preliminary criterion. The real measure of one's success lies in the extent to which the interpretation put forth is able to challenge the day's dominant belief and its concomitant methodology. My choice of a Zhou linguistic paradigm and of its specific Han/Qing elaboration as a point of departure is the initial strategic component of one such challenge. If the modern age is characterized by the disintegration of the human being, the responsible scholar's role is not just to analyze that phenomenon *ad nauseum*, but to bring forth from the repository of human experience a rigorous method capable of moving the presently disconsolate being beyond the constraints of self-defeating analysis.

Chapter 2. Postscript to *Shuowen*¹

By Xu Shen, Libationer [at the Office]² of the Han Defender-in-Chief³

"予欲觀古人之象"

"Once upon a time Pao Xi hinged the world. Above he discerned images in the sky, below he perceived rules on earth. He observed patterns on birds and beasts and how they fit their environment. Near he related to his body, distant he related to things. Thus he first created the eight trigrams of Change"⁴ and through them conveyed the ordained images.⁵ Later on Sheng Nong used knotted cords to govern and to systematize affairs. But human activities grew ever more complex, adornment and artifice proliferated. Cang Jie, the scribe of the Yellow Emperor, looked at traces of paws and talons and realized that by knowing how to differentiate their patterns one could tell the birds and beasts apart. That is how he initially conceived writing and documents.

"Occupations were regulated, populace was inspected. Likely by making a connection with the hexagram Resolve."⁶ "Resolve. Present to the court"⁷ states that writing edifies the king and transforms the court. It is "the means by which a man of

¹ For original, see appendix I.

² In charge, by virtue of seniority -- libationer is "an honorific designation for distinguished older minister" Hucker (1985) entry #542 -- of the 24 clerks comprising the office. Duan Yucai (785) and Miller (1953) p. 288 note 16.

³ "Commander of the empire's armed forces, one of the Three Dukes (三公)." Hucker #6260.

⁴ "Commentary on the Appended Verbalizations, B2."

⁵ Both the received and the excavated versions of the Commentary as well as Ban Gu's "Essay on Arts and Letters" have "以通神明之德以類萬物之情 to connect with the powers of the numinous and bright, to categorize the dispositions of the myriad things" in place of Xu Shen's "以垂憲象."

⁶ "Commentary on the Appended Verbalizations, B2."

⁷ 易 夬卦 Zhou Change. Resolve Hexagram Statement (#43).

standing confers salary and rank, settles into a moral position, and restrains himself and others."⁸

When Cang Jie first created writing, relying on category he mimicked the shapes. That is why 'graph' literally means 'pattern.' For pattern makes a thing imitable.⁹ Only later, when shape and sound combine, one refers to it as 'characters.' **Engendered** by the words of the spoken language, **characters**¹⁰ gradually multiply. **Manifested** on silk and bamboo they are called 'expression' or '**writing**.' **Write** is close in meaning and pronunciation to **liken**.

Ever since the time of the Five Emperors and the Three Kings the script kept on changing. Of the seventy-two generations that sacrificed on Tai Shan there were not two that used the same form.

According to the *Rituals of Zhou*, when at the age of seven children from entitled families first learnt to read, the Guardian instructed them in the six principles of conceiving writing. The first principle is called 'indicating the event.' Glance and recognize, inspect and see what's intended.¹¹ Up (二 上) and down (二 下) exemplify the case. The second principle is called 'mimicking the shape.' Sketch out the object, bend and curve¹² following its form. Sun (日) and Moon (月) exemplify the case. The

⁸ 易夬卦象 *Zhou Change*. Resolve Hexagram Image (#43).

⁹ Following Duan Yucai's (754) emendation based on 左傳正義 (宣公十五年) but inserting one sentence earlier.

¹⁰ Throughout this essay, word pairs in boldface indicate a sound and meaning based relation.

¹¹ Following Duan Yucai's (755) rhyme motivated emendation based on Yan's Commentary 顏氏注 to "Essay on Arts and Letters."

¹² Compare: "Without miss, the *Change* curves to complete the myriad entities." (易...曲成萬物而不遺 "Commentary, A4")

third principle is called 'shape and sound.' Taking an event for a name, grasping the relation, the two complete each other. The Yangtze (江) and the Yellow River (河) exemplify the case. The fourth principle is called 'combining intentions.' Suitably match incompatible categories and the point is clear. Martial prowess (武) and trustworthiness (信) exemplify the case. The fifth principle is called 'convergence.' Establish a category heading, like-intended members will reciprocate. **Venerable: deceased ancestor** (考) and **old: grayed septuagenarian** (老) exemplify the case. The sixth principle is called 'extension.' Effectively lacking the proper character, entrust the event by relying on sound. District Commander (令) and Regional Chief (長) exemplify the case.

Finally, at the time of Emperor Xuan, Grand Scribe Zhou, diverging somewhat from the ancient script, devised the Large Seal in fifteen chapters.

By the time Confucius wrote down the Six Classics and Zuo Qiuming transmitted his tradition of the Annals, both used ancient script. Omissions could still be retrieved and the meaning of the sages explained.

Thereupon, unimpeded by royal control, feudal lords used all their force to vie for power. They detested rites and music as damaging their interests and discarded canonical books. The country split into seven states. Acres varied in size, axles in length, statutes in principle, clothing in fashion, speech in accent, writing in form.

After Emperor Qin Shihuang first drew the world together, Counselor-in-Chief¹³ Li Si proposed to standardize writing by abolishing all graphs that did not match Qin forms. Taking up the Large Seal of Scribe Zhou and slightly abridging it, Li Si compiled

¹³ Hucker #483.

the Cang Jie Chapter, the Intermediate Director of the Livery Office¹⁴ Zhao Gao wrote the You Li Chapter, and Grand Astrologer¹⁵ Hu Mu arranged the Broad Learning Chapter, all in the so-called Small Seal.

At this time, Qin burnt classical books and eliminated ancient canons. Scores of clerks and soldiers were enlisted, mandatory border service was instituted. As the duties of civil administrators and prison guards grew in complexity, clerical style first appeared in order to simplify their communication. Usage of the ancient script was discontinued.

Hence there were eight forms of writing used under the Qin. The first form was called 'large seal.' The second was called 'small seal.' The third was called 'engraved tally.' The fourth was called 'insect style.' The fifth was called 'copy stamp.' The sixth was called 'proclamation style.' The seventh was called 'weapon style.' The final form was called 'clerical style.' With the rise of the Han, 'grass style' appeared.

According to the "Statute Concerning the Chief Military Officer,"¹⁶ educated young men aged sixteen and above are first tried out. Able to pronounce, comprehend, and inscribe a primer of nine thousand characters, they can be appointed subofficial functionaries.¹⁷ They are also tested in the eight forms of script. Commandaries forward the results to the Grand Scribe (太史) who then jointly examines the candidates. The

¹⁴ "One of the numerous subordinates of the Chamberlain for the Imperial Stud 太僕 (#6201)." Hucker #357.

¹⁵ "A subordinate of the Chamberlain for Ceremonials, the great flag bearer 太常 (#6137), in charge of great sacrificial ceremonies, especially at the Imperial Ancestral Temple and at the imperial mausoleum. The Grand Astrologer was in charge of observing celestial phenomena and irregularities in nature, interpreting portents, divining and weather forecasting as regards important state ceremonies, and preparing the official calendar." Hucker #6218.

¹⁶ Hulsewé (1959). Given Xu Shen's position as Libationer at the Office of the Commander-in-Chief, the statute, had it been observed, would have had direct impact on him.

¹⁷ "Most common generic category of state employees who performed the clerical and more menial tasks in all government agencies at all levels." Hucker #3586.

most excellent are appointed as functionaries to the Chief Steward for Writing.¹⁸ If a functionary uses writing incorrectly, he is to be reported and prosecuted. Nowadays, although the Statute is still in effect, examinations are not conducted. Because the art of philology is not practiced, long time has passed since anyone was able to explain meanings of characters.

At the time of Emperor Xuan, the court summoned one accomplished interpreter of the *Cang Jie Chapters* and designated Zhang Shang to study with him. Later experts on the subject included the Regional Inspector¹⁹ Du Ye from Liangzhou, You Li from Pei, and the Grand Master of Instruction Qin Jin. At the time of Emperor Ping, the court convened You Li and more than hundred other scholars into the Central Hall of the State to debate explanations of characters. While You Li was proclaimed the First Knight of Philology, Gentleman Attendant at the Palace Gate²⁰ Yang Xiong collected the best explanations and redacted them into the *Anthology of Cang Jie Exegesis*, consisting of the Cang Jie and fourteen other chapters, altogether 5340 headings. Almost all characters appearing in the various genres of literature were included.

When Wang Mang usurped power, he ordered the Grand Minister of Works and Censor-in-Chief²¹ Zhen Feng with his associates to revise the department of letters.

¹⁸ "Literally, in charge of writing; one of the most important titles of imperial history, a key to the evolution of the central government. ...One of the Six Chief Stewards under the Chamberlain for the Palace Revenues, responsible for the Emperor's personal secretarial works." Hucker #5042.

¹⁹ "A regular supervisory post intended to provide disciplinary surveillance over personnel in all units of territorial administration in a geographically prefixed region... Under supervision of the Palace Aide to the Censor-in-Chief." Hucker #7567.

²⁰ A supplementary honorific title. Hucker #2847.

²¹ "御史大夫 Censor-in-Chief, head of the Censorate and one of the most eminent officials of the central government, in administrative charge of censors of many sorts who maintained disciplinary surveillance over the officialdom, freely impeaching any official for public or private misconduct. In 8 B.C. post discontinued and replaced by Grand Minister of Works." Hucker #8181.

Holding that he was personally entitled to innovation, Wang Mang considerably modified the ancient script.²² During his time six styles of script came to be recognized. The first style was 'ancient graphs' consisting of the writing found in the wall of the former house of Confucius. The second was 'bizarre characters,' essentially ancient graphs that appeared somewhat unusual. The third was 'seal style,' same as the Small Seal that Emperor Qin Shihuang ordered Cheng Miao from Xiadu to devise.²³ The fourth was 'underling style,' same as Qin clerical style. The fifth was 'interlaced seal,' used for molds and stamps. The last was 'bird and bug style,' used on flags and missives.

As for the writings from the wall, when King Gong of Lu was renovating the house where Confucius had once lived, he found the *Records of Rites*, *Shang Documents*, *Annals*, *Analects*, and *Classic of Filial Piety*. Besides, Zhang Cang, the Duke of Beiping, presented the *Zuo Commentary on the Annals*. Throughout kingdoms and commanderies, mountains and rivers continued to yield *ding* ritual cauldrons and *yi* wine vessels, also inscribed with the ancient scripts of the former dynasties, all alike in appearance. Although it is impossible to trace their distant course, details can be grasped, and their general meaning explained.

But most present-day gentlemen slight these materials as nonsense and slur their advocates as curiosity lovers who, seeking to alter proper graphs, invented unintelligible scripts in order to bring chaos into common usage and to show off to the world. One by

²² Xu Shen details Wang Mang's graph fixing once: "疊 楊雄說以爲古理官決罪三日得其宜乃行之从晶从宜亡新以爲疊从三日太盛改爲三田 (卷七 晶部) According to Yang Xiong, the ancient principle prescribed officials would deliberate on a crime for three days before announcing the fitting sentence and carrying it out, thus the graph combined intentions of 'three days' and 'fitting.' Wang Mang thought that three days were too much, so changed the graph to follow 'three fields.'"

²³ Duan Yucai suggests this sentence, which contradicts Li Si's authorship of Small Seal, was misplaced and should properly belong after the next sentence: Cheng Miao devised clerical, not seal, style. (761) Xu Kai, on the other hand, argues there were two independent processes by which Small Seal came into being, Cheng Miao spearheading an effort parallel to Li Si's. (In Xu Xuan, 2004, p. 315)

one they compete in pursuing the elucidation of the meaning of the classics by means of explaining the characters. In the process they take the Qin clerical script for the writing of Cang Jie's time claiming that, since it was transmitted from father to son, no one could have managed to change it. They bark out: "a man 人 on top of a horse 馬 is elder 長, man 人 grasping ten 十 is litre 斗, insect 虫 bends the middle 中." In interpreting statutes, the Chamberlain for Law Enforcement²⁴ has gone as far as to settle the law by means of characters. Thus in "scold 苛 (a loan for 訶) a person who receives bribes," 苛 is explained as "thwart 止" and "grab 句" (i.e., "kidnap a person and seize his money."²⁵) Cases like this are too numerous to mention, inconsistent with the Ancient Writing from the house of Confucius and mistaken in regard to the Script of Scribe Zhou. Crude scholars and rustic people are satisfied with what they have already learnt and blinded to what they have not yet heard. Never having seen thorough scholarship, they do not perceive any system in the way characters are composed. Thus they marvel at old arts and delight in outrageous chatter. Deeming their knowledge to be divinely sublime they assume to have fully grasped the subtle meaning of the sages. Then, seeing the line "the younger son receives imperial mandate" in the *Cang Jie Chapters*, they [not knowing it was composed by Li Si] assert it was made by an ancient emperor [i.e., Huangdi who handed over the mandate to a younger son before ascending on a dragon] and that its words possess supernatural powers. Enough of describing their blunders and confusion. Aren't they a mess!

²⁴ Hucker #6767.

²⁵ Following Duan Yucai's explanation. (763)

The *Book of Documents* states: "I want to discern the images of the ancients." That is to say, in place of inventing explanations, one should abide by and cultivate ancient patterns. Confucius laments: "I still remember when scribes omitted text. Alas, this is no longer done today!" This does not mean that scribes did not inquire after what they did not know, only that if people used their private judgement, there would be no standard for right and wrong, crafty explanations and reckless assertions instead sowing doubt among scholars across the world.

Now, written characters are the kernel of the classics, the foundation of royal government, the means by which former generations transmitted to posterity, the channel through which later people discern antiquity. Therefore it is said: "With the base established, the Way is engendered." "Someone who knows the world's essence does not fall into chaos."

In this book I arrange seal graphs and match them with Ancient Script and the Script of Scribe Zhou. Far and wide I draw on accomplished scholars. Whether their point is of minor or major significance, I have good faith but always put them to a test, preserving their entire explanations. In order to organize groups and categories, clear misconceptions, enlighten scholars, and realize the sublime meaning, I separate graphs into sections, so that they would not intermingle. Consequently, the myriad things all can be seen here and nothing is omitted. If a meaning is not obvious, I illustrate it with an example. I follow the Meng tradition of the Change, the Kong Anguo transmission of the Documents, the Mao text of the Poems, the *Rituals of Zhou* version of the Rites, the Zuo account of the Annals, the *Analects*, and the *Book of Filial Piety*, all in Ancient Script. When a detail eludes me, I leave a blank.

Chapter Three. Categorization

Just like the first section of Ban Gu's "Essay on Arts and Letters," Xu Shen's Postscript begins with a narrative sequence taken from the "Commentary on the Appended Verbalizations." But where Ban Gu's account agrees with both the Wang Bi *textus receptus* and the Mawangdui 馬王堆 (before 168 B.C.) manuscript, Xu Shen substitutes the final dozen characters (to connect with the powers of the numinous and bright, to categorize the dispositions of the myriad things 以通神明之德以類萬物之情) with a quartet (to convey the ordained images 以垂憲象) that, foreshadowing the accent of his Postscript, portrays Pao Xi as the archetypal codifier and transmitter to posterity.

To relate and to differentiate:¹ a graphic reading of Xu Shen's opening two scrolls

The divergence is not a case of picking an argument with the Commentary as the original statement is echoed by the outset of Xu Shen's graphic composition. Its incipient chapter, heeding the imperative of reaching the spirits, comprises cognitive domains concerned with ultimate value and verticality. The opening domain of the One (一), the sole beginning and the great pivot, includes terms like primeval (𠂔), Heaven (𠂔), great (𠂔), or civil servant (𠂔). The domain of up/down (二) features the appellation True Sovereign (𠂔) and branches into the province of heavenly signs (𠂔), covering the vital

¹ The notions of relating and differentiating also figure in Xu Shen's Postscript. I take Pao Xi's creation of the eight trigrams to be based on his ability to *relate* affairs, near and far, to aspects of his body and to things respectively (近取諸身遠取諸物). Cang Jie's invention of writing in turn owes itself to his knowing how to *differentiate* the patterns in the traces of paws and talons (知分理之可相別異也).

matters of ritual (禮), fortune (福), animation (禮), sacrifice (祭), spirits of the earth (社), or uncanny calamities (祟). Next comes the threesome (三) domain, symbolizing heaven, earth, and man, distinct spheres pivoted into a triad by the king (王). The members of the triad also inform the overall structure of Xu Shen's composition, with Heaven featured in the first chapter, Man (人) in the middle eighth chapter, and soil/Earth (土 / 地) in the penultimate thirteenth chapter. Chance resemblance of the graph for king (王) with the seal graph for jade (玉), as well as the fact that in Ancient China jade was a royal attribute, allow for a smooth transition into the tightly classified section dedicated to this structure (理) rendering mineral. Likewise, accidental similarity in appearance between the symbol for three and the sketch of mist facilitates a fluid switch to the all-important concept of vapor (氣). From vapor the narrative turns back to One with the domain of man disposed to serve (士), the lowest grade of aristocracy, analyzed by the apocryphal Confucius as counting to ten (十) to make a one (一). Now the chapter reaches its breaking middle point occupied by the ambivalent vertical line pronounced either as upward (進, i.e., advance) or downward (退, i.e., retreat) connecting motion. Center (中) and flagpole (中) fall into this domain. While the first half of the chapter was, even in its manner of defining a quintessentially solid entity like jade, predominantly abstract and favoring downward motion, as in 天 being explained as "heaven issuing signs" rather than the also possible "sacrifice/show upward," the second half, after a seven character prelude consisting of the domain of vegetation sprouting to life (生) epitomized by the term birth pangs of a seed (萌), is made up entirely of one concrete manifestation of the surging motion, namely the domain of grasses (艸). Yarrow (蓍), the ever present

medicinal herb whose sturdy stalks are employed in casting a hexagram in a *Change* divination, crops up in this bulky division. The two miniscule domains of second growth (薦) and thick grass (藎) are but extensions of the grass realm. The chapter ends with the term to bury (藨), whose graphic definition of corpse stuffed around with shrub is supported by a quotation from the same paragraph of the Commentary as the Postscript's opening passage: "Ancient burials were thickly coated in brushwood." (B2) The "—" mark in the middle of the graph, explained as that through, or, on which the corpse is presented (薦), enables Xu Shen to link the terminal character back to the opening cipher of the chapter.

If Xu Shen's first chapter, with its pervading notion of verticality, is interpreted as illustrating the first part of the Commentary statement, the second chapter can be read as exemplifying its closing portion, provided one views categorization as connected to the, in graphic rendering, horizontal process of differentiation. The chapter opens with the domain of minute (𠂇). The vertical line in this initial graph, the formal link between the two chapters, is now explained as the ultimate perceptible filament, which, unlike one philosopher's concept of simple object, can be further slivered (𠂇) (interpreted through alliteration as 别). The subsequent domain of eight/to part (𠂇) is exemplified by terms divide (𠂇) and common (𠂇). Next, based on graphic similarity with 𠂇, comes the domain graph depicting a discernible animal footprint (𠂇) whose meaning, echoing the tale of Cang Jie and the invention of writing, is explained as related in pronunciation to separate (𠂇) and to differentiate (𠂇). To truly know (𠂇), detail (𠂇), or to tell apart (𠂇) fall into this domain. The parting, or, eight graph -- eight is, according to the method of

casting stalks described in section A9 of the Commentary, the prototypical even, i.e., divisible into two equal parts, number -- affixes the following domain of "to halve" (𠂔). The large non-entity (𠂔) that can be bisected is the buffalo (𠂔), whose pronunciation Xu Shen² relates to "serve" (事) and to "structure" (理). The bovine section, with its yak (𠂔) subprovince, transitions into the two character domain of 𠂔, whose heading graph Xu Shen defines as:

牛觸人角簪橫木所以告人也从口从牛易曰僮牛之告凡告之屬皆从告
A buffalo nudges a person, so a horizontal bar is pinned through its [crooked] horns as a means by which it reports to man. The graph combines the intentions of mouth and buffalo. The *Change* states: "The reporting of a calf." All characters within the "to report" domain follow report.

Critiquing Xu Shen's definition, 20th century scholars Xu Fu 徐復 and Song

Wenmin 宋文民 open their assesment of the domain graph with references to oracle bones, bronze inscriptions, and the following two *Records of Rites* passages: "In general, for beseeching one uses the currency of livestock 凡告用牲幣" (禮記 曾子問), and "In sacrificing to Heaven one uses a vermillion calf 祭天用騂犢" (禮記 郊特牲), all of which support the authors' following contention:

可見告字初義爲告祭从牛謂用牲从口謂祈禱求福易云童牛之告尙在初義許君所說未諦又言部誥字古文作𠂔从又特肉从言示部又有𠂔字乃因告誥後世各有專義禮家遂造此新字 (Xu Fu and Song Wenmin, 2003, pp. 18-19)

The initial meaning of the character 告 was to beseech through sacrifice, the cow graph refers to the usage of sacrificial animal, the mouth graph denotes praying for fortune. The *Change* usage: "Beseeching by the means of a calf" still falls within this original range of meaning, Xu Shen's explanation is false. Moreover, in the domain of to speak, the old script variant of the graph 𠂔 follows hand grasping meat and to speak (𠂔). Also, the inclusion of the graph 𠂔 in the domain of sacrifice is due to the graphs 告 and 誥 acquiring other meanings, leading ritual specialists to accordingly create this new character.

² Following Duan Yucai's emendation (50).

In subordinating their explanation of graphic intention (字意) to documented instances of the corresponding word meaning (詞義), Xu Fu and Song Wenmin follow Xu Shen's exegetical imperative, formulated in reaction to his resourceful contemporaries who would "elucidate the meaning of the classics by means of explaining the characters." The fact that despite this basic agreement in methodology Xu Fu and Song Wenmin's explanation differs from Xu Shen's is a result of prioritizing different contexts. Where Xu Fu and Song Wenmin, like most contemporary paleographers, draw on Shang and early Zhou usage to explain "original"³ character intention, Xu Shen's explanation of graphic intention is typically rooted in the later classical milieu that saw the composition of the *Zhou Change* with the attached Ten Wings' tradition of exegesis. Moreover, where Xu Fu and Song Wenmin prop their explanation with quotations from the *Records of Rites*, Xu Shen tends to be partial to the *Rituals of Zhou* transmission of rites. The *Change* quotation used by both sides to support their respective arguments brings out the difference of perspective.

Xu Fu and Song Wenmin isolate the line "僮牛之告" from the classical text in which it has been passed down and read the verbal relic against the backdrop of an earlier culture of sacrifice. Juxtaposed with similar statements preserved on ritual paraphernalia, the line sounds like a formulaic expression "Beseeching the spirits by the means of a calf." Such interpretation, however, makes no sense in the context of the hexagram, i.e., situation, in whose line statement, i.e., one of six constitutive moments, it appears, thus violating the basic principle of the Verdict 彖 Wing of the *Change* which demands that individual line statements be connected by a single idea, often expressed by the hexagram

³ According to the traditional account espoused by Xu Shen, characters were invented in the pre-Shang period, thus Xu Fu and Song Wenmin may claim earlier but not original intention.

name. Let me conjecture here a scenario that justifies both Xu Fu and Song Wenmin's as well as Xu Shen's interpretation of the passage and accounts for the resulting discrepancy.

The preclassical formula "to beseech through a calf" was, by virtue of its calf symbolism, coopted at the time of the classic's composition into the fourth *yin* line statement of the Greater Domestication 大畜 hexagram, the third and fifth line of which likewise feature tamed animal imagery. Subjected to the trigram based method of *Change* exegesis, the formula's initial meaning is transformed. Combining the defining properties of the two constitutive triplets (vigor of the bottom *qian* 乾 and control of the upper *gen* 艮 trigram), the underlying idea of the Greater Domestication is expressed by the Verdict as "Capable of restraining the dynamic, that is momentarily correct 能止健大正也," in other words, the crux of the situation lies in the ability of each of the upper three "standing" lines to rein in their energetic *yang* counterpart in the bottom triplet. In accordance with this theme, the fourth line is explained as the incipience of the controlling process. The soft and yielding fourth line resonates with the hard and rising line at the bottom of the hexagram, and, by virtue of being both correct and located above, is able to exercise control over it. The calf, as an image of youthful strength, symbolizes the initial *yang* line. Since the actual process of domestication is said to begin at the juncture point of the two trigrams, i.e., at the incriminated fourth *yin* line, 告 is interpreted as the taming of a potentially ferocious entity in the very incipience. A horizontal bar inserted through the calf's horns to prevent the mature buffalo from injuring people is the means of taming. As the passage is reinterpreted in this way, the yellow, straight-horned buffalo of the North China plain, associated with food, sacrifice,

and the cutting up (解) that reveals nature's structure (理)⁴ is replaced by the Southern crooked-horn water buffalo, the respected brute force harnessed to serve (事) in the field.⁵

Such radical reinterpretation apparently did pose a challenge to exegetes, as both the Wang Bi and Mawangdui variants of the passage substitute 告 of Xu Shen's Meng text: the first with its cognate 牯, interpreted as the horizontal bar; the second with the term "to inquire (how a case fits statutes and ordinances) 鞫," a non-classical character serving either as a phonetic loan or a distant synonym (in the respective senses of to denounce and to inquire, 告 and 鞫 were commonly used in Han legal terminology).⁶ To understand Xu Shen's ability to make sense of the Meng text's orthography consider his treatment of the term's three cognates: 𡇗 is grouped in a sequence of the five characters 禔祔祖𡇗祔 tied to the idea of ancestral temple, and is glossed "to sacrifice in order to report 告祭也." 牯 is listed in between 牽 (to drag a bull) and 牢 (pen, corral) and interpreted on the basis of *Documents* passage as "confining bulls to a pen or horses to a corral 牛馬牢也 ... 周書曰今惟牯牛馬." Finally, 誥 is catalogued alongside the characters 詔諱詔誓, unified by the notion of verbal bond, while its gloss as 告 is taken from the "Explaining Ancient Usage 釋詁" chapter of the *Approaching Standard*. In his comment, Duan Yucai emphasizes the hierarchical aspect of 誥: the term always refers to the person above

⁴ Any decent rancher or shepherd will testify that bulls are notoriously easy to slice, in contrast to rams, whose muscle indiscriminately adheres to bone and cartilage. (Mikoláš Gigac, Šumiac, 7 July 2011)

⁵ The distinct cultural associations in regard to the buffalo were specified by a chance gathering of three native speakers (Shanghai, Nanjing, Zhejiang) over a lunch in Dudley House dining hall, 28 January 2005. Roel Sterckx (2002, p. 35) interprets the relation to 理 as pertaining to boundaries of farming plots.

⁶ According to Michael Loewe, lecture at the International Sinological Center, Prague, 11 May 2012.

commanding a person below. Moreover, 詔 (imperial command) is identified by Duan Yucai as a Qin period character and a likely interpolation into Xu Shen's work concerned with classical characters. 誥, Duan Yucai proposes, is the classical way of writing 詔 (92).

Three aspects of the cognate meaning emerge: to constrain, to beseech (from below up), to command (from up to down). Xu Shen is able to combine all these into his definition of 告. 告 is the act of constraining a calf that enables man to command the animal, and the animal to report back to its master. The inversion of hierarchy (beseech vs. command) can also be applied to Xu Fu and Song Wenmin's sacrificial context: if man used sacrifice to report to and beseech the spirits, its purpose was to control them to the point that they would in turn obey the sacrificer's command and, just like the calf, report back to him. Where the first chapter underscored the power of spirits, the second, man centered chapter, in Xu Shen's winding explanation of 告, illustrates the way in which man, just as the "standing" trigram, is capable of restraining a more powerful force by the combination of yielding and positioning. Initially man was reporting to the stronger force, now he is able to domesticate it, to make it report to him.

The transformation of a yellow buffalo, the sacrificed object, into a water buffalo, the communicating subject, is critical for the narrative flow of the second chapter. While so far the chapter was concerned with the object of differentiation, the domain of 告 marks the transition to the means by which differentiation is articulated, i.e., the mouth.

Mouth (口), the domain into which 告 steers the chapter, is defined as the "means by which man speaks and eats." The Image 象 Wing of *Change* characterizes the Jaws 頤 hexagram, which follows Greater Domestication in the Sequence of Hexagrams 序卦 (the

two hexagrams share the outer "controlling" trigram and the inner rising yang trigram, but differ in that the bottom mature yang *qian* trigram of Greater Domestication is substituted by the incipient yang 震 *zhen* trigram of Jaws), as "a man of refinement speaks cautiously and is measured in his food and drink 君子以慎言語節飲食," emphasizing the connection between restraint and the two basic functions of the mouth. Well-fortuned (吉) and verbal precision (崗) are two adjacent terms in the mouth domain. After three tiny subprovinces of the mouth domain (凵 , 𠂔 , 𠂔) the graphic narrative turns abruptly to 𠂔 , the generic term for walking, the quintessence of horizontal motion. 𠂔 , the bottom part of the graph, depicting a foundation and interpreted as a graphic loan for the foot, constitutes the subsequent domain. In its verbal sense 止 means to restrain, as in the Verdict passage quoted above. The 止 graphic element in its loan sense of foot links the subsequent tiny domains of trample (𠂔), step (𠂔), this (𠂔), correct (𠂔), and right (𠂔), as well as the sizeable domain of to walk and to halt (𠂔) exemplified by the way (𠂔). The upper part of the 𠂔 graph, interpreted as a small step, comprises the following domain of 𠂔 that includes the terms potency (𠂔) and to attain (𠂔). The 𠂔 graphic element links the next minuscule domains of extend one's step (𠂔), to steady one's trod (𠂔), and to hasten (𠂔). The graphic element 𠂔 , now employed for its phonetic property, ushers in the ensuing tooth (𠂔) domain, with the molar (𠂔) domain, due to similarity between ancient script variants of the two graphs (𠂔 𠂔), coming next.

The tooth graph (𠂔) fortuitously links the mouth domain and the various walking domains, a fact confirmed by the next domain of leg 𠂔 and its variant 𠂔 . For where in

the tooth graph (𪔐) the foot graphic element is located above the depiction of mouth with teeth (象口齒之形), in the leg graph (𧀂), 𧀂 is situated below a graphic element suggestive of mouth. Even if Xu Shen's composition is concerned with Small Seal script, here he is apparently taking advantage of the semblance between the mouth graph in clerical script (口) and the upper part of the leg seal graph (𧀂). Using this semblance as a link, the domains of 𧀂 and 𧀂 are followed with a domain graph comprised of three mouths and expressive of multitude (𠂔). The ambiguity of the 口 graphic element is once again exploited in the transition to the next domain of thrice perforated (𠂔) bamboo flute, the harmonizer of sounds (𦏧). 𦏧, the graph combined with the three openings, is explained through alliteration as to structure (理). The bottom graphic element of 𦏧 makes up the last domain of the chapter, explained as king's written command to aristocrats (𦏧). The graph depicts bamboo strips of unequal length arranged horizontally and tied with a string.

My reading of the first chapter as emphasizing connecting vertical motion and of the second chapter as intertwining themes of differentiation, restraint, and horizontal motion aims not just to substantiate the Commentary's claim "to connect with the powers, to categorize the dispositions 通德類情," but also to illustrate the degree to which Xu Shen's work needs to be read horizontally as much as vertically, a matter-of-course for *Shuowen* specialists like Wang Yun 王筠 or Duan Yucai.⁷

⁷ "In general, domains are ordered on the basis of graphic similarity, and within a domain characters are grouped by meaning extension. 凡部之先後以形之相近爲次凡每部中字之先後以義之相引爲次" (1)

long lost *Anthology of Cang Jie Exegesis*. Few⁸ entries can be ascertained to supply Xu Shen's own definition, which a modern dictionary user is prone to expect. Afterall, it is the efficiency of his classification system rather than the power to define individual terms that Xu Shen cites as his chief ambition:

將以理群類 ... 分別部居不相雜廁⁹

So as to organize sets and categories ... I separate [seal graphs] into domains and sections so that they would not intermingle.

Thus in his statement of purpose Xu Shen makes an explicit connection between the concepts whose relation has only been assumed so far, namely, set/category (群類) and separation/differentiation (分別). The passage is also the last of five instances in the Postscript that feature the term category, the other being:

When Cang Jie first created writing, relying on category he mimicked the shapes.

The fourth principle is called 'combining intentions.' Suitably match incompatible categories and the point is clear.

The fifth principle is called 'convergence.' Establish a category heading, like-intended members will reciprocate.

Almost all characters appearing in the various categories (i.e., genres) of literature were included.

Categorization underlies five crucial steps in the development of writing: the creation of graphs by mimicking categories of shape, the linking of two characters from distinct categories, the positing of a common category, the cataloguing of written texts, and the compilation of an exhaustive inventory of classical written signs. Juxtaposed with four instances concerned with characters, the passing mention of categories of literature may appear less consequential. Only seemingly so, for both Liu Xin's *Seven Divisions* and Ban

⁸ Given the long list of works concerned with character exegesis in Ban Gu's "Essay on Arts and Letters," Gui Fu goes as far as to claim that Xu Shen compiled rather than created the *Shuowen*. Quoted in Ma Zonghuo (1959) p. 1.

⁹ Quoting the opening part of *Jijiu Chapters* 急就篇: "The Jijiu's is exceptional, different from other books, in that it orders the names, designations, and appellations, and differentiates them into sections so that they would not intermingle. 急就奇觚與眾異羅列諸物名姓字分別部居不雜廁."

Gu's "Essay on Arts and Letters," the templates for Xu Shen's Postscript, are devoted to literature taxonomy. Xu Shen's classification of characters is an extension of the task of his predecessors to sort books by genre.

The worldview of the "Commentary on Appended Verbalizations"

Xu Shen's emphasis on classification is in tune with a tradition that regards a primitive categorizing device as the prototypical human invention. The reason why Pao Xi, the alleged founder of that tradition, found it imperative to categorize is intimated in the opening section of the Commentary:

方以類聚物以羣分吉兇生矣 (A1) 吉兇者言乎其失得也 (A3)

Forms gather by category, things separate by set: auspicious and ill-fated arise. ... As for well-fortuned and ill-fated, these predicate the success and failure of enterprise.

With unnerving terseness a connection is posited between the natural process by which concepts cluster into categories and entities divide into groups and the odds for the outcome of action: informed by appropriate categorization feats lead to triumph, underlied by unsuitable classification deeds end in defeat. Pao Xi's investigation of phenomena between heaven and earth enables the sage to discern laws governing their coming together and moving apart and on this basis create a protean classification device, the eight trigrams, capable of duplicating¹⁰ the movement of nature in a form accessible to less sagacious minds, thereby guiding them on a course of action predisposed to success. Just how differentiation and categorization manifest in nature, what enables the

¹⁰ The critical distinction between the concepts of mirroring and duplication is painstakingly elaborated by Willard Peterson (1982, pp. 90-1). Michael Puett (1997, p. 512), on the other hand, does not differentiate between the two: "[the author of the 'Xici'] then presents the changes in the hexagram lines of the divination text known as the *Yi* as mirroring the changes that occur in the natural world."

sage to duplicate this process, and how a man of refinement may avail himself of this sagely design constitute the intertwined themes of the Commentary. The annotated selection below traces the argument relevant to categorization.

天尊地卑乾坤定矣卑高以陳貴賤位矣動靜有常剛柔斷矣方以類聚物以羣分吉凶生矣在天成象在地成形變化見矣是故剛柔相摩八卦相蕩鼓之以雷霆潤之以風雨日月運行一寒一暑乾道成男坤道成女乾知大始坤作成物乾以易知坤以簡能易則易知簡則易從易知則有親易從則有功有親則可久有功則可大可久則賢人之德可大則賢人之業易簡而天下之理得矣天下之理得而成位乎其中矣 (A1)

Heaven is respected, earth is deferential: *qian* and *kun* are settled. Humble and lofty are aligned: noble and inferior position themselves. There is invariance in movement and stillness: hard and soft are determined. Forms gather by category, things separate by set: well-fortuned and ill-fated arise. In Heaven forming images, on earth taking shapes: transformation is manifested. Therefore, hard and soft rub against each other, the eight trigrams sway one another; drummed by thunderclap, moistened by wind and rain, sun and moon marching in progression, cold alternating with heat, the way of *qian* engendering the male, the way of *kun* materializing as female. *Qian* knows the great beginning, *kun* acts to complete entities. *Qian* knows by means of ease, *kun* is capable through simplicity. Easy is easy to know, simple is easy to follow. What is easy to know attracts kin, what is easy to follow yields merit. Affinity makes things last, merit makes them great. The ability to make things last constitutes the potency of the Talented Man, the ability to make them great constitutes his enterprise. With ease and simplicity the structure of the world may be grasped. Once the structure is grasped, positioning matures in its midst.

天尊地卑乾坤定矣

Heaven is respected, earth is deferential: *qian* and *kun* are settled.

Following the two directions of Pao Xi's gaze, universe is demarcated by heaven above and earth below. Since earthly processes are evidently subordinated to movements in the skies, the Commentary does not need to persuade its readers of the attributes with which it endows heaven and earth, namely, respected and deferential. The plain observation that universe is constituted by the polarity of heaven and earth and that this polarity is hierarchical in nature, one leading, the other following, is sufficient for the establishment of the two concepts underlying Change,¹¹ namely *qian* and *kun*. Simply put,

¹¹ Peterson interprets each of the opening five sentences as consisting of an initial claim that refers to how things are in the world (Change) and a conclusion that draws an implication from this state of affairs for the technique of duplication (*Change*). Even Peterson admits that such interpretation is heavily dependent on

qian means "to rise and emerge 上出也" (卷十四 乙部), *kun* is another term for earth, the physical aspect of universe (卷十三 土部).

卑高以陳貴賤位矣

Deferential and high are aligned: noble and inferior position themselves.

The basic conceptual hierarchy is next mapped onto space. As deferential and high align, their respective positions assume the designations noble and inferior. This logical step is important for three reasons. First, it introduces the dual aspect of force (勢) and position (位), or, actor and stage, into the conceptualization of Change. Second, by settling the relative worth of a position once and for all irrespective of its future occupant, it opens the possibility for an upsidedown alignment of forces: e.g., for a respected force to be located in an inferior position. As a consequence, the disposition of a force ceases to be merely a matter of innate tendency and becomes to a degree situational: a deferential force will show divergent inclinations depending on whether it finds itself in a noble or an inferior position. Finally, although this third aspect becomes apparent only as one interprets the hexagram record, position is equated with time. Thus what is being conceptualized is the gradual unfolding of a situation, the irregular shifting of momentum through evenly alternating instants of time.

動靜有常剛柔斷矣

In motion and rest there is invariance: hard and soft are determined.

The defining feature of momentum, conceived both as force and factor of time, is derived from another observation: just as the eye detects alteration of movement and stillness, so it is also possible to conceive of propensity to motion and of tendency to rest,

the bracketed words of his translation. I find this interpretation unconvincing, particularly in regard to the fourth and fifth sentences: why should auspiciousness and transformation pertain only to technique? I instead locate the contrast of referential frames (Change vs. *Change*) in the juxtaposition of the opening two sections.

of occasion to retreat and of time to advance. This active-dormant polarity of momentum finds its expression in the pairing of hard and soft aspects.

In three steps a type of reality underlied by hierarchical polarity is posited, projected into space and time, and given expression there. The subsequent claim describes its operation:

方以類聚物以羣分吉凶生矣

Forms gather by category, things separate by set: well-fortuned and ill-fated arise.

In line with the distinction between *qian* and *kun*, the contention begins from a state of separation. I say separation because in order for concepts to gather, they must initially be discrete. The notion of category is introduced as the means by which apparently disconnected concepts are brought together. This conceptual gathering, provided one's reading does not interrupt the flow of the sentence, in turn produces undifferentiated individual entities. I say undifferentiated because in order for entities to divide, they must initially be lumped together: just as divergence was necessary for gathering to take place, amalgamation is a prerequisite for differentiation to happen. And where category was the notion connected with conceptualization and gathering, set becomes the idea tied with concretization and the act of division: categories gather abstractions, sets split entities.

Since only conceptual pairs have been posited so far, the kind of categorization alluded to here is characterized by the coming together of opposites. The manner in which this counterintuitive -- categories should unite alike, not fuse dissimilars -- act of categorization is carried out is illustrated by the Verdict on the situation of Contrariety:

天地睽而其事同也男女睽而其志通也萬物睽而其事類也睽之時用大矣哉 (易睽彖)

Heaven and earth may be contrary (literally, marked by divergent strabismus), but their affairs are made the same.¹² Man and woman may be contrary, but their wills connect. The

¹² Xu Shen's gloss on 同 as 合會也 is curious, for rather than contrasting 同 with 異 (different) and defining the term as "same" it circumvents "sameness" by highlighting the notions of matching and

myriad things may be contrary, but their affairs categorize. The use of the situation of Contrariety is indeed great!

Entities may have contrary constitutions, but their functions bring them together: just like the two eye axes are aligned by perceiving the same reality. The closing line further emphasizes application over constitution. Its exact phrasing, "the use of the situation ... is indeed great," appears in two other Verdicts, on Danger (literally, sink-hole 險坎) and Adversity (literally, lame, crippled 蹇難). As the hexagram names signal, all three situations are untimely. Their intrinsic difficulty, however, sets the stage for a person capable of turning drawback into advantage. In the case of Contrariety, the impediment is generated through repulsive opposition; the purpose is accomplished through the yoking of the diverging entities. The three parallel verbs: to make same, to connect, to categorize, specify the manner of yoking. Moreover, the parallel between them brings out the nuance in the meaning of categorization: to categorize is to combine into one, to relate the disconnected.

The degree to which the tradition of *Change* values linkage over separation is highlighted by the contrast between the two situations, paired in the Sequence of Hexagrams Wing, envisioned as juxtaposing the aspects of *qian* and *kun*. The situation in which the *qian* aspect (heaven) is located below the *kun* aspect (earth) is termed Prosperity; the situation in which *kun* is placed below *qian* is designated as Obstruction. The reason why the upsidedown alignment is considered favorable, while the anticipated configuration does not bode well, has to do with the presence/absence of interaction. *Qian*, which literally means to rise, moves up; *kun*, symbolizing matter and retreat,

combining (卷七 門部). Only things which are initially different can be matched or combined, in this sense 同 comes after 異: difference is ontological, sameness is epistemological.

moves down. While in the situation of Prosperity opposite inclinations bring the two constituents together, in the situation of Obstruction they drive them apart. The respective Verdicts characterize the two situations as:

泰 ... 天地交而萬物通也上下交而其志同也 (易 泰象)

否 ... 天地不交而萬物不通也上下不交而天下無邦也 (易 否象)

Prosperity: ... Heaven and earth interact, and the myriad things connect. Nobles and commoners associate, and their wills combine.

Obstruction: ... Heaven and earth do not interact: the myriad things stay disconnected. Nobles and commoners do not associate: the world winds up without states.

The presence/absence of interaction between the ultimate opposites of heaven and earth reflects on the state of entities delimited by them: when the two poles interact, entities flow together; when the two extremities disconnect, entities do not intermingle. In a general sense, the two situations can be taken as describing the extreme modes of experiencing reality: the volatile state in which the mind sees linkage everywhere and the blocked condition in which the world seems a brick wall. In the context of human society, association between the elite and the masses leads to intersection of interests; the separation of castle and town results in anarchy, i.e., individual refusal to participate in a larger unit.

Two types of categories need to be differentiated: categories that combine things of one kind, such as when individual *yang* lines are said to be of the same category; and categories that combine dissimilar members, such as when a *yin* and a *yang* line resonate. The first type assumes the previous existence of a particular category, the second type presupposes the creation of a category for the purpose of combining different things. Whether entities gather with members of the same initial category, or whether they seek dissimilars, depends on particular situation. So the Patterned Words Wing of *Change* comment on the ruling line of the *Qian* hexagram:

飛龍在天利見大人何謂也子曰同聲相應同氣相求水流濕火就燥雲從龍風從虎聖人作而萬物睹本乎天者親上本乎地者親下則各從其類也(易 乾九五 文言)

"Dragon flying in the sky. Beneficial to encounter a great man." What does it refer to? The Master said: "Those of same tone resonate, those of same substance seek one another." Water flows to moisture, fire pursues drought; clouds chase the dragon, winds follow the tiger. The sage creates and the myriad entities manifest. When what is founded in heaven shows affinity for upward motion and what is rooted in earth shows affinity for downward motion, then each thing will follow its category.

In a *Qian* situation, things of the same kind tend to each other. This characterization contrasts with the hexagram statement of *Kun*, explained by Wang Bi as:

西南得朋東北喪朋 (易 坤卦辭) 王弼注 西南致養之地與坤同道者也故曰得朋東北反西南者也故曰喪朋陰之爲物必離其黨之於反類

... Find friends in the southwest, abandon friends in the northeast. ... Wang Bi: Southwest is the direction of utmost nurturing, it shares the way with *kun*, therefore the line states "find friends." Northeast is the opposite of southwest, therefore the line states: "abandon friends." In general, *yin* is such a thing that it must leave its company in order to revert to category.

In a *Kun* situation, categorization depends on the relative position. If a *kun* thing finds itself in a place attuned to it, it holds onto its kind. If a *kun* thing is located in a place opposed to it, it abandons its kind. The last part of Wang Bi's comment echoes the characterization of the Prosperity and Obstruction hexagrams in the Mixed Hexagrams Wing of *Change*:

否泰反其類也(易 雜卦)

In the Obstruction and Prosperity situations things counter/return to their categories.¹³

In the situation of Obstruction, entities remain within already existing categories. In the situation of Prosperity, entities seek to transcend existing categories. The two situations express the extremes of the two kinds of categorization.

¹³ Lynn's (1994, p. 115) translation "Prosperity and Obstruction are opposed in kind," while certainly accurate in regard to the relationship between the two hexagrams, does not make sense in the context of other hexagram pairs, which also typically consist of opposites. In other words, there is no reason why only Prosperity and Obstruction should be explicitly opposed in kind and not other hexagram pairs as well.

While the respective Verdicts on Prosperity and Obstruction detail interest, will, or function as the aspects of disparate entities that facilitate convergence, the prototypical feature associated with categorization surfaces in the Verdict on Gathering:

觀其所聚而天地萬物之情可見矣 (易 萃象)

In observing how they gather, the dispositions of heaven, earth, and the myriad things can be seen.

The previous passages simply outlined the way things are. This verdict concerns the manner in which they can be known. Explicitly, the verdict states that by observing how things come together their dispositions are revealed; implicitly it entails that without such converging motion dispositions remain hidden. Once again, the initial state of separation is necessary as it allows dispositions to connect, attract, and thereby manifest. Disposition shows itself to be a relational term: things are not disposed on their own, but to one another. Since only gathering can disclose disposition, it makes no sense to speak of disposition of static or diverging entities. The human eye first perceives how categories take shape in nature, and only then detects the dispositions of their members.

There is, however, apparently something wrong with some of these dispositions or their configuration as the -- to the authors of the Commentary -- obvious consequence of the twofold process of assimilation into category and division into sets is the arising of a polarized situational tendency: auspicious moments and their participants attract success, doomed circumstances and their protagonists magnetize failure. To have bad luck shadow one's step is not just a distinct trait of being human, calamity is part of the basic wiring of nature. But so is providence. The degree to which success depends on the relating of dispositions is highlighted in the Commentary's closing sequence:

八卦以象告爻象以情言剛柔雜居而吉凶可見矣變動以利言吉凶以情遷是故愛惡相攻而吉凶生遠近相取而悔吝生情偽相感而利害生凡易之情近而不相得則凶或害之悔且吝 (B12)

Eight trigrams report through images; line and hexagram statements communicate through dispositions; hard and soft intermingle to manifest well-fortuned and ill-fated. Flux and movement are expressed in terms of what is advantageous, well-fortuned and ill-fated shift according to disposition. Therefore, attachment and repulsion collide with one another to generate well-fortuned and ill-fated; distant and near relate to one another to generate regret and remorse; disposition and craft rouse one another to generate advantage and harm. In general, for *Change*, when there is proximity of dispositions but things do not obtain each other, there is ill fate, harm, or regret and remorse.

Well-fortuned and ill-fated arise out of the particular way in which things intermingle. The inability to get hold of one another despite immediacy of disposition is the only explicit definition of ill-fate given in the Commentary. Disposition does not characterize a situation as a whole but its shifting momentum. While each situation is modeled as progressing through six stages during which it arises, matures, and terminates, its general outlook is determined by the interaction of these six temporal constituents, now conceived of simultaneously. These are referred to as lines, or, factors. Judgements, or verbalizations, are attached to these factors to express their relative disposition. And as lines intermingle and dispositions interact, auspiciousness and ill-fate manifest.

The resolution of the relative auspiciousness of a situation is the focal concern of *Change*, as such knowledge may lead to efficacious action. To outline reality's mode of operation as characterized by the reshuffling of polarized phenomena, to analyze this redistribution as consisting of categorization and differentiation, and to detect the germination of success and failure in this process are three vital steps through which the Commentary sets the parameters for human inquiry: to know is to know categorization, to know categorization is to detect the seeds of fortune, to detect the seeds of fortune is to embark on the course of success.

The practical orientation of the Commentary comes to fore in the ensuing sentence of the opening paragraph, which, rather than speculating on *why* reshuffling results in misfortune, proceeds to *how* it reveals itself:

在天成象在地成形變化見矣

In Heaven maturing into images, on earth growing into shapes: transformation is manifested.

Qian and *kun*, force and position, noble and inferior, hard and soft, well-fortuned and ill-fated, these were all conceptual tools that conveyed a highly abstract type of reality. Now, by equating heaven and earth with the two physical stages on which the visible drama of transformation plays out, the Commentary concretizes reality. Images and shapes, the objects of daily perception, represent the maturation of the intangible energies described above, and as such contain all their aspects, from basic polarity to penchant for success. Transformation, the process which they in turn enunciate, consists in one thing or one configuration changing into another. The trajectory from conceptual polarity to physical transformation is evidently all the Commentary needs to postulate, as the subsequent sentence purports to derive from, rather than add to, this foundation:

是故剛柔相摩八卦相蕩鼓之以雷霆潤之以風雨日月運行一寒一暑乾道成男坤道成女
Therefore, hard and soft rub against each other, the eight basic situations sway one another; drummed by thunderclap, moistened by wind and rain, sun and moon marching in succession, cold alternating with heat; the way of *qian* engendering the male, the way of *kun* maturing into female.

Hard and soft are the aspects through which polarity is expressed in space and time; eight situations encompass all possible permutations of these aspects' minimal configuration. By minimal configuration I mean such arrangement that translates into shapes and images. The moment polarities are configured, they begin to affect each other, setting the course of transformation in motion. This motion is selfpropellent, as the drumming of thunder initiates and the moisture of rain and wind sustains it. The nature

images invoked correspond to the basic situations: thunder and lightning picture *zhen* 震 and *li* 離, moisture recalls *dui* 兌, wind and rain embody *xun* 巽 and *kan* 坎, the orderly succession of sun and the moon and the regular alteration of heat and cold hark back to *gen* 艮, the situation associated with control. The final task of the transformative process, the materialization of the underlying polarity in the form of male and female, is left to *qian* and *kun*, the original pair.



Fig. 2. Pao Xi and Nü Wa, demiurges, incarnates of *qian* and *kun*. Wu Liang Ci ceiling carving, rubbing made by Huang Yi. (After Wu Hung, 1989, p. 246)

The narrative next turns to the generative knowhow of this dual source:

乾知大始坤作成物乾以易知坤以簡能易則易知簡則易從易知則有親易從則有功有親則可久有功則可大

Qian knows the great beginning, *kun* creates and matures entities. *Qian* knows by means of ease, *kun* is capable through simplicity. Easy is easy to know, simple is easy to follow. What is easy to know attracts kin, what is easy to follow yields merit. Affinity makes things last, merit makes them great.

Not content with simply noting the tremendous generative power of duality, the Commentary turns to analyzing the manner in which polarity is able so effectively to create. *Qian* and *kun* are no longer envisioned as impersonal forces, but as conscious protagonists. *Qian*, the leader of the pair, takes up knowledge, *kun*, the subordinate member, engages in action. Since the great beginning is nothing else than the One,¹⁴ *qian*'s role is to comprehend and thereby stay in touch with the source, both primordial and present, that splits into opposites, i.e., polarizes. Attentive to *qian*'s quest, *kun* creates an expression for it. The means by which *qian* traces the ultimate is by being effortless. Rather than exerting itself to steer clear of danger,¹⁵ *qian* plays it safe through adjustment, just like the lizzard who wards off frost by chilling through it. Without dissipating energy, *qian*'s graceful pursuit of knowledge lies in openness to modification. Ease, after all, is modification, the opposite of transformation: "When change as modification exhausts itself, change as transformation takes its place 易窮則變 (B2)."¹⁶ The pliable *qian*, in other words, knows by remaining *qian*. The creative capacity of *kun*, on the other hand, is

¹⁴ 一 惟初太始 ... (卷一 一部)

¹⁵ 德行恆易以知險 (B12)

¹⁶ In this I come close to Anne Cheng's (2006, p. 258) rendering. Angus Graham (1989, p. 359), without providing any textual support, claims the opposite: "易 'substitute, exchange' (X replacing or changing places with Y); and 變 'alter' (X changing but remaining X)."

due to plainness: the ability to sift through conceptual complexity and to splinter off.

Rather than fixating on the intricacies of a predicament, *kun* acts to compartmentalize it.

When something remains what it is, it becomes recognizable; when something does not stray into idleness and ostentation, it is easy to follow along. To be recognized is to reach out;¹⁷ to be followed is to be able to settle a country through toil.¹⁸ To reach out is to ensure things do not end with oneself, to settle a country is a great achievement.

可久則賢人之德可大則賢人之業易簡而天下之理得矣天下之理得而成位乎其中矣
The ability to make things last constitutes the potency of the Talented Man; the facility to make things great constitutes his enterprise. With ease and simplicity, the structure of the world is grasped. Once the structure is grasped, positioning is realized in its midst.

To reach beyond oneself and to secure accomplishment, the endpoints of a seemingly cumbersome, but at the time rather routine, type of reasoning by extension, are, unlike the far more pedestrian ease and simplicity, two qualities worthy to be identified with the potency and enterprise of the proverbial man of talent. This 'man of talent,' unlike the beyond reach sage, is someone the reader may hope to emulate. And, splendid appearances aside, it is precisely his dedication to the prosaic pair of ease and simplicity that renders the structure of the world visible to him. And, just as the knowledge of *qian* invites the innovation of *kun*, comprehension results in the kind of gradual positioning that perfects any given configuration of phenomena.

To summarize, there may be other ways of conceptualizing the universe, the advantage of seeing it in terms of *qian* and *kun* is that these terms also contain a blueprint for how one may conceptualize. In the system just described, there is no discrepancy between *how* and *what* one conceptualizes, no rift between epistemology and ontology.

¹⁷ 親至也 (卷八 見部)

¹⁸ 功以勞定國也 (卷十三 力部)

The Commentary takes this coherence one step further by introducing the figure of the sage at this point. The sage, one may infer here, is able to grasp *qian* and *kun* and to merge his *who* with their *how* and *what*. By embodying the original pair, the sage acquires its creative potential. Having attained the primal power of creation, the sage produces a reality different in form but same in principle with the one imperfectly experienced by humans on daily basis. Where the essential aspects of mundane reality are too subtle to allow ordinary human conceptualization, the sage invents to make these explicit. The resulting contraption, the technique of *Change*, by manifesting the invisible guides to a more refined perception. The resulting discernment breeds two vital facilities: men of refinement are able to adjust their conduct on its basis, while the sages transform its specific aspects into cultural artifacts that benefit humanity. The description of the manner in which the sages set about devising *Change* opens the next section of the Commentary:

聖人設卦觀象繫辭焉而明吉凶剛柔相推而生變化是故吉凶者失得之象也悔吝者憂虞之象也變化者進退之象也剛柔者晝夜之象也六爻之動三極之道也是故君子所居而安者易之序也所樂而翫者爻之辭也是故君子居則觀其象而翫其辭動則觀其變而翫其占是以自天祐之吉無不利 (A2)

The sages set up the trigrams to discern/make visible the images and attached verbalizations to make well-fortuned and ill-fated clear. The hard and soft pushed each other and generated transformation. Therefore, well-fortuned and ill-fated image failure and success; regret and remorse image anxiety; transformation images advance and retreat; hard and soft image day and night. The movement of the six lines steers the course of the three ultimates. Therefore, a man of refinement settles and finds rest in the sequence of the *Change*, delights in and plays with the lines' verbalizations. Therefore, staying put, a man of refinement discerns the images and plays with the verbalizations, about to act, he discerns the transformation and plays with the prognostications. By these means he is "miraculously assisted by Heaven: well-fortuned and advantageous in every respect."

聖人設卦觀象繫辭焉而明吉凶

The sages set up the trigrams to discern/make visible the images and attached verbalizations to clarify well-fortuned and ill-fated.

Interpreted diachronically, the two sentences demarcate the incipience and the endpoint of the process of fashioning *Change*. Pao Xi laid down the technique's foundation by creating the eight trigrams, the *Change* equivalent of eight basic situations. The trigrams enabled their users both to discern images of *Change* and to express *Change*, in other words, both to think and to communicate through images. Building on this foundation, King Wen doubled trigrams into hexagrams,¹⁹ these too were imaged and named. The Duke of Zhou then completed the process by furnishing each hexagram and its constituent lines with verbalizations. His purpose in attaching the verbalizations was to articulate the fortunes involved therein, i.e., words were summoned to overtly interpret, or, decide on, what had been implicitly imaged.

Read synchronically, the connected sentences describe the essentials of a technique that consists in imaging and interpreting reality: trigrams and their combination facilitate representation; words and phrases determine its auspiciousness. The distinction between image and interpretation, between shaping and decoding reality, is maintained throughout the Commentary, as is the link between verbalization and articulation of fortune.²⁰ From the vantage point of the sages and their technique, reality is first pictured through images, the seeds of fortune revealed in these images are then articulated in words. From the perspective of *Change*, the same process unfolds in opposite direction: conceptual reality is differentiated in terms of fortune and only then manifested. The reversal of the acts of differentiating and imaging in progressing from *Change* to *Change* is continued into the next sentence:

¹⁹ As stated, for example, in the *Change* section of the "Essay on Arts and Letters."

²⁰ For example: "The distinction between well-fortuned and ill-fated is to be found in the verbalizations 辯吉兇者存乎辭 (A3) 繫辭焉以斷其吉兇 (A8)."

剛柔相推而生變化

The hard and soft pushed each other generating transformation.

In the first section, hard and soft aspects were established before differentiation and manifestation; here they appear after image and interpretation. Even if both sections end their respective lines of reasoning in transformation, in the first section transformation is manifested, here it is generated. The distinction highlights the fact that by tracing the course of natural manifestation back to its underlying polarities, the sages effectively tapped the source of transformation. Rather than imaging the shapes of transformation, the sages proceeded to figure transformation on conceptual level. The sage's ability to image concepts, or, to be more precise, to link concepts to images is the subject of the following inference:

是故吉兇者失得之象也悔吝者憂虞之象也變化者進退之象也剛柔者晝夜之象也六爻之動三極之道也

Therefore, well-fortuned and ill-fated image failure and success, regret and remorse image anxiety, transformation images advance and retreat, hard and soft image day and night. The movement of the six lines traces the course of the Three Ultimates.

To facilitate comprehension, abstract concepts through which the sages articulate the technique of *Change* are explained as images of real world phenomena. By linking concepts to images, the Commentary extends the scope of image: image does not only shape or resemble, it can also stand for. In this capacity to symbolize a range of phenomena, image links conceptual and concrete levels of perception. In the process not only is conceptualization concretized, tangible world too is conceptualized. Thus physical transformation becomes the manifestation of advance and retreat; day and night the articulation of hard and soft aspects. This extended notion of image allows object and abstraction to interpenetrate, fusing levels conventionally set apart. Images designed by

the sages not only map the visible world but also convey finer aspects of reality. Images, in Duan Yucai's words, "depict, figure, and conceive 形像圖像想像" (375).

The technique of *Change* analyzes images as products of the interaction of six constituent moments. Conceived as three pairs, the six moments and their activities correspond to the course of the three ultimates, i.e., heaven, earth, and man. Where heaven and earth are the upper and lower limits, man embodies their combined potency and point of intersection (禮運曰人者其天地之德陰陽之交 365).

是故君子所居而安者易之序也所樂而翫者爻之辭也是故君子居則觀其象而翫其辭動則觀其變而翫其占是以自天祐之吉無不利

Therefore, a man of refinement settles and finds rests in the sequence of the *Change*, delights in and plays with the lines' verbalizations. Therefore, staying put, a man of refinement discerns the images and plays with the verbalizations, about to act, he discerns the transformation and plays with the prognostications. By these means he is "miraculously assisted by Heaven: well-fortuned and advantageous in every respect."

A man of refinement begins to avail himself of the technique of the sages by realizing that any given situation, rather than constituting an isolated incident, is part of a chain of events. Furthermore, just like the polarity of the surrounding phenomena, man is characterized by the alteration of rest and activity. He begins in a state of activity. By discerning how situations follow one another and how their tendencies are expressed through corresponding images, he is able to come to rest. From rest he returns to activity, but of a new kind. Where man's initial activity consisted in being moved around, by initiating his new pursuit from the state of rest, he is able to decide its direction, to move on his own knowledge and volition. His comprehension of images and of their import paves way for man's recognition of the rules of transformation and his ability to predict its outcome, the basis for deliberate action. The explicit purpose of consulting and acting upon *Change* is to secure the assistance of Heaven, the guarantee of success.

The final line of the second paragraph, consisting of, to the practical relevance of *Change*, key citation of the top line statement of the Great Holding Hexagram (易 大有 上九), is elaborated on in the last section of the first wing of the Commentary:

易曰自天祐之吉無不利子曰祐者助也天之所助者順也 (A12)

Change states: "Miraculously assisted by Heaven: well-fortuned and advantageous in every respect." The Master said: "'To miraculously assist' is 'to help.' Heaven helps the one who complies ..."

Heaven's help is ensured by man's compliance, a trait characteristic of *kun*:

乾天下之至健也 ... 夫坤天下之至順也 (B12)

Qian is the utmost of vigor in the world. ... *Kun* is the utmost of compliance.

Man secures the help of Heaven by playing the part of *kun*, or, of the earth. The relevant nuance in compliance is brought out by Xu Shen's following gloss:

順理也 (卷九 頁部)

Compliance is related in meaning to pattern/structure.

The gloss, far from being matter-of-fact, inspires Duan Yucai's following comment:

理者治玉也玉得其治之方謂之理凡物得其治之方皆謂之理理之而後天理見焉條理形焉非謂空中有理非謂性即理也順者理也順之所以理之未有不順民情而能理者 (418)

'To structure'²¹ is literally 'to work the jade.' When the manner in which a piece of jade is to be worked is grasped, one refers to it as textured. In general, when the manner in which entities are to be handled is grasped, one refers to them as structured. Structure entities and only then does the Pattern of Heaven become manifest, only then do the veins and strains assume form. It is never stated that pattern/structure exists in void, or that nature equals principle.

Now as for how compliance relates to pattern, one patterns a thing by complying with it; there has never been a case of one being able to structure without complying with people's dispositions.

Taking an issue with the basic tenet of Song philosophy, Duan Yucai stresses the physical aspect of structure. Immaterial principle does not exist outside a concrete manifestation, structure reveals itself through a specific form. Only by discerning the fine distinctions in the phenomenal world may one arrive at an understanding of structure.

²¹ It is impossible to consistently render the multivalent term 理 into English. For Duan Yucai the term shifts along the texture-pattern-structure continuum, in Song understanding it refers to principle.

Duan Yucai's comment on 'texture-pattern-structure' is understandably extensive:

戰國策鄭人謂玉之未理者謂璞是理爲剖析也玉雖至堅而治之得其蹇角思理以成器不難謂之理凡天下一事一物必推其情至於無憾而後即安是之謂天理是之謂善治此引伸之義也戴先生孟子字義疏證曰理者察之而幾微必區以別之名也是故謂之分理在物之質曰肌理曰腠理曰文理得其分則有條而不紊謂之條理鄭注樂記曰理者分也許叔重曰知分理之可相別異也古人之言天理何謂也曰理也者情之不爽失也未有情不得而理得者也天理云者言乎自然之分理也自然之分理以我之情絜人之情而無不得其平是也 (15-6)

Intrigues of the Warring States proclaim: "Zheng people refer to jade without structure as crude jade." From this one may infer that structure is differentiation. Although jade is extremely hard, once you obtain its vein, it becomes easy to shape it into a utensil; then it is referred to as structured. In general, for every affair and every entity in the world you have to press for its disposition and eliminate its qualms for it to become settled; that is called Heavenly Structure, that is called good dominion. This is the extended meaning.

Dai Zhen in *Evidential Verification of the Meaning of the Terms in the Mengzi* states: "Structure is the name for examining the utmost subtlety and differentiating it. That is why it is referred to as differentiation. When it is the physical substance of things, it is called veins, sinews, or texture. When you get its way of splitting, then there is distinctness and no cluttering, it is referred to as orderly. Zheng Xuan in his commentary on the 'Records of Music' chapter of the *Records of Rites* states: 'Structure is differentiation.' Xu Shen states: 'Knowing to differentiate the structure, one could tell differences apart.' What did the ancients mean by Heavenly Pattern? They claimed structure meant not losing the disposition. It is impossible to get to the pattern of things without grasping their disposition. Heavenly Structure refers to natural differentiation. Natural differentiation is to assess people's disposition through my own disposition and never not to get it at its rest."

Dai Zhen in various ways plays out the link between pattern and differentiation.

Even more important in the context of the polemic with Song philosophy is his claim that pattern as proper differentiation can only be obtained by complying with a thing's disposition. A thing's disposition is assessed through one's own disposition. In other words, the way man relates to things allows him to see how things relate to each other, and, in dependence on this, to properly differentiate them. The world's eventual structuring depends on its underlying intersubjectivity. Only by first categorizing the dispositions of things, an activity to which the images and verbalizations of *Change* are indispensable, does man eventually arrive at the Pattern of Heaven, compliance with which in turn guarantees Heaven's assistance.

I have discussed the opening two sections in their entirety for, in my reading, they encapsulate -- just like *qian* and *kun* sum up all the other hexagrams -- the argument of the whole Commentary. Where the first section describes Change, the second section outlines the technique of its duplication. The point where the two sections meet is the notion of image. Sages discerned images in the world, but also manifested images to convey their understanding of that world. Men of refinement in turn use images created by sages as their point of departure. It may accordingly be helpful to turn to one of the ways in which the Commentary details the notion of image:

聖人有以見天下之賾而擬諸其形容象其物宜是故謂之象 (A8)

聖人有以見天下之動而觀其會通以行其典禮繫辭焉以斷其吉凶是故謂之爻 (A12)

The sages, able to perceive the world's subtlety and to anticipate it through its shape and content,²² fittingly imaged entities, that is why one calls it image.

The sages, able to perceive the world's commotion and to discern its point of convergence so as to enact the corresponding rites and canons, attached verbalizations to determine good and bad fortune, that is why one calls it imitation/factor/line statement.²³

The sages are unique in two ways: they can both see the imperceptible and express it; to detect the hub of motion and situate themselves in it to separate fortune and ill-fate. While on first sight the two abilities may seem distinct, on closer inspection of the pivotal term 擬 they prove related. Xu Shen lists 擬 after 揆 and glosses both as "related in meaning to 度."²⁴ The shared sense of the terms 擬, 揆, and 度 falls in the range of words like "guess, conjecture, approximate, judge, evaluate, assess." Two of the terms appear in this sense in the saying: "揆情度理 To consider the circumstances, to judge by

²² "In general, content speaks of the inside, appearance describes the outside 凡容言其內兒言其外." (406)

²³ 爻 is cognate with 效 to effect; to imitate.

²⁴ (卷十二 手部) Both Xu Xuan's and Xu Kai's versions have 葵也. Duan Yucai's emendation (604), based on a Tang manuscript quoted in 六書故, is preferable also because loan character based glosses are rare, although not unseen (e.g., 禮履也) in the *Shuowen*. Duan Yucai traces the source of the loan gloss to the Mao Commentary: "小雅天子葵之傳曰葵揆也謂段葵爲揆也."

common sense." As for the specific connotations of each term, 揆 is featured in Xu Shen's paronomastic explanation of 癸: "癸冬時水土平可揆度也 In winter, water and earth are still, one can therefore survey and measure them" (卷十四 癸部). I accordingly translate 揆 as "to survey the land" to emphasize its aspect of spatial approximation. 度 is defined by Xu Shen as "norm 法制" (卷三 又部). The following line from the *Analects* is helpful in illustrating the nuance of the term: "論語曰謹權量審法度 To be circumspect about weights, to be cautious about measures."²⁵ "To measure," like "to survey the land" is concerned with space and comes close to "standard; yardstick." Finally, for 擬 let us examine its one other appearance in the Commentary:

易之爲書也原始要終以爲質也 ... 其初難知其上易知本末也初辭擬之卒成之終若 (B9)
The gist of *Change* is to tap the beginning and to deploy the conclusion. ... The opening line of a hexagram is difficult to figure out, the top line is easy to comprehend, the two being root and branch. Initial verbalizations anticipate, the closing lines ripen, so as to bring about a sense of conclusion.

The passage draws out the temporal aspect of 擬, which contrasts the term to 揆 and 度, both primarily concerned with spatial approximations. Rather than surveying or measuring space, 擬 entails anticipation. The sages detect the imperceptible by predicting its manifestation. Abstraction and representation are but temporal aspects of the same reality: any given situation moves from intangible to concrete. Images designed by sages are temporal extensions of original subtlety. The sages' ability to see beyond ordinary reality is coupled with the knack for expressing this vision. On distinguishing what

²⁵ Book XX. 堯曰第二十

underlies the world, the sages expressed it in concrete rather than abstract terms. The most subtle of things can be given concrete shape.²⁶

In saying that sages use images to extend and to anticipate, I take issue with the view widespread in Western scholarship that sees the sages as comparing or drawing analogies. For example, Richard Lynn, a recent translator of *Change*, interprets 擬 as "drawing comparisons to them with analogous things."²⁷ Angus Graham, an influential exponent of the "thinking through analogies" view of one strand of philosophy worldwide renders 擬 as "finds analogues for it in his representations."²⁸ I see three problems with the application of analogy in this context. First, in its basic sense of agreement of ratios, analogy refers to geometrical proportion. It thus pertains to spatial rather than temporal projections and would better be reserved for 揆 or 度. Second, just like in comparing the lengths of sides of two triangles, analogy presupposes discontinuity of domains. In the present context, saying physical expressions are analogous to immaterial principles puts a wedge between the two. This positing of discontinuity leads to an even more problematic feature of analogy, namely sameness. Since there is no actual connection between abstract principle and its physical expression, the two must be regarded as in some way identical. Finally, since this identity is, in the real sense, false, analogy can only be used

²⁶ The other possible interpretation of 擬諸其形容 is to "imitate its appearance." Duan Yucai for one uses 擬 in the sense of "to imitate" in: "凡言讀若者皆擬其音也凡傳注言讀爲者皆易其字也 In general, any gloss that states 'read like' imitates the sound of the glossed word. On the other hand, when a commentary states 'read for,' it always substitutes the glossed character" (6). The two interpretations are not detached: imitation is related to anticipation. Since the imitated object is undergoing change, the tracking of its appearance entails the ability to anticipate. If one imitates what is already apparent, one is imitating the past form of an object. If one's imitation entails anticipation, then one is able to reflect the present state of an object or even to project its future shape.

²⁷ Lynn (1994) p. 56. And again, "draw comparisons with things." (Ibid., p. 91)

²⁸ Graham (1989) p. 362.

for illustration. Thus, on this view, images enable the sages to speak figuratively of the subtle aspects they perceive, but not to express them directly.

In contrast, I read the Commentary as describing the sage as someone who detects a link between conceptual understanding and its physical manifestation. Where Graham focuses on identity, my interpretation stands on difference. Manifestations do not have to exactly conform to the abstract principle, they draw it out. Hard and soft, heaven and earth, day and night, each pair in its own way, extend *qian* and *kun* into various cognitive domains. By juxtaposing these different manifestations, one can approximate *qian* and *kun*. Since hard, heaven, and day all draw out *qian*, their similarity, occasioned by the underlying concept, can be taken for granted. Consequently, their differences may be allowed to come forth, unlike in the case of analogy which tends to highlight the aspect of identity.

The Commentary next claims that the sages "fittingly imaged entities, that is why one calls it image." In other words, the characteristic of image is being appropriate. In Lynn's or Graham's interpretation, to be fitting is to draw a useful analogy. By drawing various analogies one may be able to better liken the various aspects of *qian*, but one does not alter what *qian* actually is. On the other hand, if suitability is taken to refer to the existence of a connection, i.e., if an image is fitting because it extends the concept that underlies the thing at hand, then not just the way one speaks about a concept but the concept itself undergoes change. The sages did not just borrow things from the physical world to express the unspeakable, they linked phenomena to concepts, merging conceptual and physical levels. Image embodies, rather than illustrates, a concept. To image is to extend rather than to compare.

For a more thorough grasp on 'suitability,' consider its use in the passage quoted in the opening paragraph of Xu Shen's Postscript:

觀鳥獸之文與地之宜 (B2)

[Pao Xi] discerned how the markings on birds and beasts suited the environment.

Suitability is associated with imitation, as animals fit their environment by means of mimicking its features in their own appearance. For an illustration of what Pao Xi might have observed, consider the following case from the field of lepidoptera:

When a certain moth resembles a certain wasp in shape and color, it also walks and moves its antennae in a waspish, unmothlike manner.²⁹ When a butterfly has to look like a leaf, not only are all the details of a leaf beautifully rendered but markings mimicking grub-bored holes are generously thrown in. "Natural selection," in the Darwinian sense, could not explain the miraculous coincidence of imitative aspect and intimate behavior, nor could one appeal to the theory of "the struggle for life" when a protective device was carried to a point of mimetic subtlety, exuberance, and luxury far in excess of a predator's power of appreciation.³⁰

Moths and butterflies, creatures of the animal kingdom capable of artistic perfection typically associated with man wrought things, practice mimicry to a point that goes beyond ordinary levels of perception. Mimicry, the notion that enabled Pao Xi to create basic images, is part of nature. The appearance of a butterfly is not a pale reflection of the thing imitated, but brings out details of the imitated object invisible to the naked eye. In striving to imitate, both the moth and the sage move beyond the imitated object. Their creation extends an object in a certain direction, it likens rather than mirrors it.

The observation of mimicry in nature precedes Pao Xi's creation of the eight trigrams, the prototypical images conveyed by the sage. The Commentary specifies the way in which the relatively simple eight trigrams are capable of encompassing the world's complexity in the following way:

²⁹ A rare moth species with precisely these attributes plays a central role in Nabokov's short story "The Aurelian (Пилграм)." Nabokov (1997) pp. 248-259.

³⁰ Nabokov (1989) p. 125.

八卦而小成引而伸之觸類而長之天下之能事畢矣 (A9)

Eight trigrams constitute a small completion. Drawing on them and extending, striking a category and expanding, all the world's affairs are encompassed.

The technique's ability to progress from simple to complex is underlied by the notion of extension. "Drawing and extending" refers to the manner in which the eight trigrams are combined into sixty-four hexagrams. Striking a category then allows these sixty-four situations to expand to all the world's affairs. To see the world as simple or as complex is a matter of contraction and expansion. To strike a category is to be able to contract back to the simple or to expand into the complex, to connect the abstract and the concrete.³¹

Unlike other texts from the Warring States period, the Commentary does not start with a cosmogony on which it would then model its argument, but by direct observation of the world here and now. In whichever way the universe may have come into existence, as it appears to Pao Xi, it is characterized by polarity: of respected and deferential, of high and low, of movement and rest. And this discovery of polarity facilitates the creation of the technique of *Change*, which unfolds from polarity. Moreover, unlike the dichotomist systems of Bronze Age China, this polarity of existence is not characterized by strife, opposition, or mirroring effect, but by hierarchy and interconnectedness. While the Commentary never explicitly describes the way the universe was generated, the gradual unfolding of the notation system that allows its functioning to be duplicated is outlined as:

是故易有大極是生兩儀兩儀生四象四象生八卦八卦定吉凶吉凶生大業 (A11)

Therefore, *Change* contains the Great Pivot, the Pivot generates the Two Models,³² the Two Models generate the Four Images, the Four Images generate the eight trigrams, the eight

³¹ Lynn (1994, p. 62) renders 觸類 as "to use the corresponding analogies," suggesting that, like imitation, categorization entails thinking through analogy.

³² 度法制也毛傳曰儀善也又曰儀宜也又曰儀匹也其義相引伸 (375)

trigrams determine well-fortuned and ill-fated, well-fortuned and ill-fated generate the great enterprise.

After a series of arguments that weave together the levels of cosmic Change and *Change* as technique, the Commentary infers the existence of a pivot (or, following the Mawangdui variant, constant 恆). While the text explicitly states here that the pivot generates the Two Models, i.e., the two contrasting polarities, the reverse scenario is also implied: one only speaks of a pivot when there is something to be balanced. Two levers create a tipping point as much as the point creates them. Only after the contraries of heaven and earth, of high and low, of hard and soft encountered on daily basis come to be understood as two poles of a spectrum, rather than as disparate entities, can the two be spanned together and a common origin posited. Pivot allows a duo to function as an orchestrated pair, to come together and to move apart, to contract and to expand. That the pivot does not play any further role in the generation of the subsequent notation signs, the Four Images and the eight trigrams materializing through an exponential expansion, illustrates the degree to which two rather than one is the primary number of *Change*. But while two is the primary number, its nature is determined by one. One pivot makes two contraries into poles. Two and all the subsequent numbers function through one.³³ And while the Way may be one, it is comprised of two aspects: "One *yin* and one *yang* are referred to as the Way 一陰一陽之謂道" (A5).

The pivot is the point of contact as well as the place where one pole turns into the other. Consider Xu Shen's comment on 壬, the ninth heavenly stem:

³³ The function giving role of one is highlighted by the yarrow stalk method of divination (A9). Out of the initial fifty stalks (the number of the great expansion) one is taken out and remains set aside throughout the subsequent seventy two operations (4x3x6) that generate a hexagram. Forty-nine out of the fifty stalks are used in the actual casting. Thus one in itself is not a useful number, it becomes effective by making other numbers functional.

陰極陽生故易曰龍戰于野戰者接也（卷十四 壬部）

When yin reaches its extreme, yang is born, that is why the *Change* states: "Dragons fight in the field." To fight is to come into contact.

Xu Shen refers here to the top *yin* line of the *Kun* hexagram. As a situation comprised entirely of *yin* factors culminates, it turns into *yang*, the opposed pole. The top line of *Kun* apparently encompasses the point of alteration, also referred to as the 'source,' the 'sole beginning,' the 'Great Pivot,' or, the 'basis of the Way.'³⁴ This one crux is the means through which all cosmic entities may be brought together. The duality driven Commentary discusses the concept of 'one' in two instances. First, as part of the Master's comment on the fourth nine of the Reciprocity hexagram (咸):

子曰天下同歸而殊塗一致而百慮 (B5)

The Master says: "The world returns to the same place but through different routes; it has a single aim but hundreds of deliberations."

Reciprocity is situated at the start and initiates the movement of the Second Part of the *Change*. The hexagram, in which all three line pairs resonate, is characterized by mutual stimulation, a trait capable of setting things in motion. The situation begins to stir at the incriminated fourth nine, where the bottom standing (止) and the upper delight (兌) trigrams intersect, and where the initial *yin* and the fourth *yang* lines rouse one another. In this context, 'oneness' underlies the ability of two opposed forces to affect each other.

The other mention of 'one' culminates a chain of arguments that make up the first section of the Second Part of *Change*:

吉兇者貞勝者也天地之道貞觀者也日月之道貞明者也天下之動貞夫一者也 (B1)

As for well-fortuned and ill-fated, inquiring through the oracle meets them out; as for the way of Heaven and earth, inquiring through the oracle discerns it, as for the course of the sun and the moon, inquiring through the oracle illuminates it, as for the world's commotion, inquiring through the oracle pivots it with one.

³⁴惟初太極道立於一造分天地化成萬物 Following Duan Yucan's emendation of 極 for 始 (1).

Where the Master's statement described the world as underlied by oneness, the claim here concerns man's role in pivoting the world. Inquiring through the oracle, the prototypical human activity, allows man to meet out well-fortuned and ill-fated, to discern the course of Heaven and Earth, and to make all the world's activities into one. The world may be underlied by oneness, but it needs man to realize that oneness. Man's vital ability to span many into one, the essence of categorization, hinges on his having the means by which to categorize. And herein lies the indispensability of the sage and his creations. For where ordinary beings are widely capable of knowledge, their ability to categorize is limited, particularly when it comes to meeting out auspicious and ill-fated. In their emphasis on categorization, the *Change* and its Wings contrast with a tradition concerned with naming. The following line neatly sums up this point:

夫易 ... 其稱名也小其取類也大 (B6)

Now as for the technique of *Change* ... the matter of it naming things is small, the matter of it relating through category is great.

The terminology of categorization

Given the above emphasis, a scholar rooted in the *Change* may be expected to approach writing, another of sagely creations, as primarily a categorizing device. Three terms (類, 羣, 屬) roughly equivalent to category appear in the *Shuowen*:

類種類相似唯犬爲甚从犬類聲 (卷十 犬部)

注曰釋詁毛傳皆曰類善也左傳刑之頗類段類爲類 (476)

'Classification: dog kind'³⁵ designates a situation where things of various types look alike. Since this is most evident in the case of dogs, the character falls into the cognitive domain of dog. The character may be cognate with characters pronounced like 類.

Duan Yucan: Both the "Explaining Ancient Usage" chapter of the *Approaching Standard* and the Mao Commentary on the *Poems* gloss 'category' as 'good.' When the *Zuo Commentary* states: "Punishment that breaks the transgression," it substitutes 類 for 類.

³⁵ 類 covers a semantic spectrum that corresponds to classification-categorization-likeness-type-kind.

Three characters share this cognate relationship, as the various loan usages noted by

Duan Yucai confirm:

禴以事類祭天神从示類聲(卷一 示部)注曰古尚書說非時祭天謂之禴...禮以類爲禴(4)
'To worship in kind' is to sacrifice to heaven and spirits by means of things that are of the same category as the worshipped entity. The character falls into the cognitive domain of sacrifice and may be cognate with words pronounced like 類.

Duan Yucai: Old-text version of *Shang Documents* states: "Untimely worship of Heaven is referred to as worship-in-kind." Ritual texts substitute 類 for 禴.

Timeliness is apparently the main attribute of sacrifice; when this aspect is missing, it is supplanted by sacrifice in kind. "In kind" may refer to both things and spatial directions. For example, Heaven is associated with south, so a 禴 sacrifice directed at Heaven would take place in the southern suburbs. This particular cognate/substitute of category thus contrasts with timeliness (時), the other seminal term in Han thinking.

類難曉也从頁米... (卷九 頁部) 注曰謂相似難分別也類類古今字 (421)

'Jumble' means hard to make out. The character combines the intentions of head and rice. ...
Duan Yucai: The term refers to a situation where two things are so similar that they become hard to differentiate. In early texts the character 類 was used, later it was supplanted by 類.

類絲節也从糸類聲(卷十三 糸部) 注曰節者竹約也引申爲凡約結之稱絲之約結不解者曰類引申之凡人之愆尤皆曰類左傳(昭公二十八年傳)忿類無期是也 (645)

'Tangle' is a fiber node. The character falls in the cognitive domain of fiber and may be cognate with characters pronounced as 類.

Duan Yucai: Node is a bamboo joint. In its extended sense it means knotted in general. When threads are intertwined in such a way that they cannot be unraveled, they are called tangled. In general, any human lapse may be referred to as tangle, like in "the undue tangle of anger" of the *Zuo Commentary*.

The cognate meaning of characters that share the pronunciation of 類 is to merge things on the basis of similarity into clusters that flout differentiation. In Xu Shen's case, I take "category" to mainly refer to sound category (聲類). In the sense of lack of

discrimination, category contrasts with both set 羣 and domain 屬, the two terms

connected in Xu Shen's case with the notion of cognitive, or, referential domain (事類).³⁶

羣輩也从羊君聲 (卷四 羊部)

'Set: flock of sheep' is like contingent. The character falls in the cognitive domain of sheep and may be cognate with characters pronounced like 君.³⁷

In its literal sense, category as dog kind contrasts with set as sheep flock by virtue of the properties of the respective animals. Dogs constitute an animal species with one of the most diverse appearances. On the other hand, the domain of sheep includes even goats, differentiated by the specification "mountain sheep (山羊)." Sheep and goats often share more similarities than breeds of dogs. Members of a set that includes sheep and goats (or members of the same cognitive domain) contrast with one another; members of the dog class (or members of the same sound category) conceal differences.

屬連也 (卷八 尾部) 注曰凡異而同者曰屬 ... 凡言屬而別在其中 (402)

'To fall into a domain' is to connect (as in a train like chain).

Duan Yucan: In general, when different things are joined together one calls it domain. ... Whenever domain is posited, difference between its members is implied.

The offshoot of this Duan Yucan's repeatedly used comment is his favorite exegetical strategy that draws on the distinction between broad (渾言) and strict (析言) sense. For example:

詩志也 (卷三 言部) 注曰毛詩序曰志之所之也在心爲志發言爲詩按許不云志之所之徑云志也者序析言之許渾言之所以多渾言之者欲使人因屬以就別 (90)

'Poem' is related in meaning to intention.

Duan Yucan: The Great Preface states: "Poem is the place where the intention goes. In the mind it is called intention, once it is expressed through words it is called poem." The Great Preface explains the strict sense, Xu Shen speaks broadly. The reason why Xu Shen so often speaks broadly lies in his wanting people to rely on domain in order to pursue difference.

³⁶ An idiomatic variation of the Commentary's statement further highlights the contrast between category and gathering on the one hand and set and separation on the other: 物以類聚人以群分.

³⁷ The cognate relationship between 羣 and 君 is confirmed by the paronomastic gloss 君羣也 appearing in 荀子王制篇, 荀子君道篇, 韓詩外傳五, 孝經鈎命決, 白虎通號篇, 白虎通三綱六紀篇. Zhang Yiren (1976) p. 1205.

Xu Shen, in Duan Yucai's reading, mainly relates and categorizes, leaving the job of analysis to his reader. Categorizing by domain creates a contrastive framework to be used by the interpreter. Pao Xi's sagely work of inventing the trigrams is completed by Xu Shen's ordering of nearly ten thousand (i.e., myriad, encompassing all phenomena) characters. The difference between sages rooted in the numinous and ordinary human beings does not lie in superior powers of analysis but in the ability to connect. Unlike the Commentary, Xu Shen's narrative posits a direct link between Pao Xi's initial act of categorization and the creation of writing.³⁸ Characters, Xu Shen argues through narrative, extend Pao Xi's categories.

³⁸ Although the long second section of the second wing of the Commentary likewise begins with Pao Xi's creation of the trigrams and ends with the fashioning of writing, it portrays writing as one of many creations. Xu Shen, on the other hand, skips other creations, putting trigrams, knotted cords, and writing in one continuous progression, unfolding from simple to complex. Moreover, in stating that Pao Xi invented the trigrams to convey the ordained images, Xu Shen locates a new aspect in this initial act of creation: proper categorization not only ensures Pao Xi's success, it also entitles Pao Xi, and his successors, to codification. This natural categories based codification contrasts with arbitrary codification, the notion embraced both by Xunzi and the contemporary scholar.

Chapter Four. Narrative Clues

As the closing lines of the previous chapter illustrated, a useful clue for unraveling Xu Shen's vision of the six principles is the manner in which the theory is framed by the Postscript's narrative. The presence of a cogent narrative distinguishes Xu Shen's Postscript from Ban Gu's "Essay on Arts and Letters," which provides a parallel account of some of the same events. Where Ban Gu's version gives the impression of a patchwork that rarely smooths out transitions or even contradictions,¹ Xu Shen molds his facts into a story. The contrasting of the two accounts brings out the logical consistency of Xu Shen's Postscript, making its narrative structure, which displays clear authorial intent, a tool in the hand of an interpreter.

The Postscript's opening sequence begins with Pao Xi's creation of trigrams and ends with Cang Jie's fashioning of graphs. The subsequent chain of events, which describes the evolution of the script, unfolds from Cang Jie through scribe Zhou to Li Si's creation of Small Seal. To retell this part of the story, Cang Jie first mimicked objects according to category. The resulting graphs were linked to pronunciation, the pairing of graphs and language occasioning the proliferation of signs and their maturation into a writing system. The form of the script, however, continued to change, as each subsequent generation adapted rather than adopted the lettering of its fathers. This claim of continuous adjustment completes the initial stage of the development of Chinese writing, for which three principles are posited: mimicking the shape of [categories of] objects,

¹ For example, early Han legislature cited in both works stipulates candidates are to be examined in six forms of script. Ban Gu matches these six forms with scripts used under Wang Mang, almost two hundred years later. Or, Zhang Shang, whom Xu Shen identifies as Du Ye's grandfather, is mentioned after Du Ye in Ban Gu's account.

link to pronunciation, and formal fluidity. Next, a detailed description of a pedagogical practice centered on the six principles is inserted. The laying down of explicit principles in turn facilitates Scribe Zhou's fashioning of the first standardized Chinese script form, a feat to be emulated some six centuries later by Li Si and his Small Seal.

Invention vs. application

A glance at the order of the principles, however, exposes an apparent contradiction in Xu Shen's account: for where Cang Jie created graphs by relying on representation, the Guardian roots his instruction in abstraction. To resolve this inconsistency, the genesis of writing under Cang Jie and the manner of its application as taught by the Guardian need to be set apart. The idea of taking the six principles' epithet "of conceiving writing" in the sense of "conceptualizing," as opposed to "creating," may surprise readers habituated to the premise that the nature of a cultural device is best revealed in the process through which it comes to existence.² A potential source behind Xu Shen's rejection of this type of birth determinism is intimated by his casting of Cang Jie in the aforementioned account. For Cang Jie is first documented in a section of the *Xunzi* 荀子 that defends the -- to the philosopher's opponents absurd -- position that those who effectively utilized the invented implements of the past were superior to the inventors themselves:

故好書者眾矣而倉頡獨傳者壹也好稼者眾矣而后稷獨傳者壹也 倕作弓浮游作矢而羿精於射奚仲作車 乘杜作乘馬 而造父精於御自古及今未嘗有兩而能精者也 (荀子 解蔽)
There have been many keen on writing, yet that Cang Jie alone is remembered is due to the singularity with which he applied himself to his art. And for the same reason, out of all those

² Compare: "He who thus considers things in their first growth and origin, whether a state or anything else, will obtain the clearest view of them." Aristotle (1996) pp. 11-12.

fond of husbandry, only Houji is remembered. Chui invented the bow and Fuyou made the arrow, but Yi got the essence of archery. Xizhong invented the chariot and Cheng Du discovered how to harness horses, but Zaofu distilled the art of driving. Never has there been one able to master both the aspects of creation and application of an art at the same time.³

In line with the overall argument, the *Xunzi* depicts Cang Jie, already a subject of popular legends, as a uniquely skilled practitioner rather than creator. Although Xu Shen follows another version of the legend, preserved by Han Fei 韓非 and the *Huainanzi* 淮南子, he does so to support, in a different context, the same argument as the *Xunzi*. By reducing Cang Jie to the role of a creator, it becomes possible to argue for the superiority of a later vision of writing. *Xunzi*'s final sentence makes it impossible for someone who knows to device an implement to be able to perfect its use. Creation and application exclude each other, the act of invention inferior to the way in which a contraption is eventually employed.⁴

Xu Shen's linkage of the six principles with the *Rituals of Zhou*, a register of government departments and offices that purports to describe the system of the Zhou kings at its peak, further accentuates the aspect of application. Since the climactic days of the Zhou are a time of completion rather than formation of tradition, the Guardian's instruction reflects the distillation of an art. Moreover, generally speaking, rules are better suited to describe how an existing device operates than to guide its creation, a process that often works best when allowed to defy rules. Xu Shen's narrative suggests that by

³ The passage is also discussed in Puett (1997) p. 490 and Bottéro (2006) p. 136.

⁴ The idea that the six principles concern application rather than invention of writing has been recognized before, notably by Duan Yucai and William Boltz. Where Boltz (2003, p. 145), not wanting to complicate his own story of the evolution of Chinese writing, asserts that the six principles were never intended as "an explanation of the evolutionary processes that generated the Chinese script *ex nihilo*," Duan Yucai (755) identifies precisely the "construal of the six principles as pertaining to Cang Jie's fashioning of characters" as the source of the utter confusion with which his forerunners had shrouded the foundational framework.

the time the office of the Guardian was established, the unruly formative stage in the development of writing was over, supplanted by a systematizing drive.

Codification as rationalization

The explicit purpose of the six principles was to instruct Zhou aristocrats from the age of seven on in the arts of letters. As a teaching tool, the theory likely fulfilled both a descriptive and a prescriptive role, i.e., on the one hand it was rooted in an existing practice, on the other hand it could shape its future direction. Given the formal fluidity of scripts in this period, attested both by Xu Shen's narration and excavated materials,⁵ any account of writing practice had to be selective at this point, incorporating certain aspects while ignoring others.

Apart from elementary instruction, Xu Shen imparts another role to the schema by the manner in which he frames it in the narrative. The sentence preceding the exposition of the six principles gives an improbably exact count of generations that sacrificed on Taishan. Now, seventy-two is the number of operations it takes to cast a hexagram using the yarrow stalks method. The digit carries the connotation of a sudden completion: even as seventy-one operations are finalized, there is no way of telling where the last step may steer the process. Only as the last batch of stalks is counted off, does each previous stage acquire its significance, and the overall situation abruptly materialize. Analogically, only after the script of the ancient dynasties was subjected to seventy-two permutations could the contours of a finalized, rule governed form emerge.

⁵ Qiu Xigui (1988) pp. 40-51.

The outline of writing principles is followed by the creation of the Large Seal. The juxtaposition of a set of rules and of the first recorded instance of script codification highlights the degree to which, for Xu Shen, standardization is based on rationalization. Rather than setting an arbitrary custom in stone, as someone like Xunzi would advise, Xu Shen's Scribe Zhou counters arbitrariness with a tightly woven set of principles. His innovation marks a watershed in the history of Chinese letters. Up to this point, writing evolved along loose criteria, changing in form and principle⁶ from one generation to the next. Putting a fullstop to this process, Scribe Zhou, emulating Pao Xi, ordains rule conforming images intended as standard for generations to come.

Evolving vs. fixed scripts

If the applicability of the six principles to the writing of preceding generations reflects the descriptive aspect of the theory, its use as the blueprint in the creation of a standardized script underlies its prescriptive role. Consequently, the precise balance between the descriptive and normative roles of the Zhou grammatical⁷ theory hinges on the relation between ancient script and Large Seal. Comparing these forms, Xu Shen observes that Large Seal "somewhat/sometimes differs from ancient graphs 與古文或異." Duan Yucai makes a case out of the ambivalent "somewhat/sometimes," proposing that Large Seal did not entirely rewrite earlier script, in fact, in most cases it did not alter

⁶ Think, for example, of the parasemantic quality of oracle bone graphs vis-a-vis the one graph one pronunciation rule operating in the *Zuo Commentary*.

⁷ *Gramma* means letter.

ancient graphs at all.⁸ Recent discoveries corroborate Duan Yucai's assessment, as graphs featured on Zhou bronzes dating from the period immediately preceding the reign of King Xuan tend to match Large Seal forms preserved by Xu Shen.⁹ Large Seal meant selective formalization of existing graphs, not the creation of new forms.

The timing of Scribe's Zhou innovation is not accidental. The reign of King Xuan marks the end of Zhou supremacy, the commencement of its decline. The achievement of the dynasty in regard to writing is laid down for posterity through a set of rules and a fixed form of script. The weakening of central authority, however, impedes their enforcement. Three centuries later, Confucius and Zuo Qiuming would use yet another version of the non-standardized ancient script. Thereafter, political fragmentation intensifies and ancient script, which had been characterized by a single line of transmission and, at one point, the existence of a rule conforming standard, splits into regional varieties.

The de-facto political unification of the Chinese oikumené by the First Emperor of Qin reopens the prospect of script standardization. Li Si's writing reform entails three steps: eradication of regional forms used outside the historic Qin area, return to Large Seal, and, finally, its abridgement. The first two steps are interconnected, as Qin script, based on the evidence of both Xu Shen and the excavated materials,¹⁰ closely resembled Large Seal. This was because the state of Qin was in several ways a descendent of the Zhou. It occupied what had once been the core Zhou area, and, for subsequent centuries situated on the periphery of the Chinese civilization, it held onto ancient customs more

⁸ 或之云者不必盡異也蓋多不改古文者矣 (757)

⁹ Qiu Xigui (1988) pp. 49-50.

¹⁰ Ibid. pp. 51-52.

firmly than its evolving neighbors in the heartland.¹¹ Between attacks from non-Chinese tribes to the west and accusations of barbarity from Chinese states to the east, the Qin conserved earlier cultural forms.

Initially, Large Seal differed from ancient script more in idea than form. Where ancient script was characterized by fluidity, and, as long as a line of transmission was maintained, this fluidity constituted a duct rather than obstacle to reaching the sagely intention, Large Seal stood for the idea of a fixed form. In its conservatism, the Qin came closer to the notion of immutable past than to the continuity of transmission idea embraced in the homeland of Confucius. Apart from its resembling Qin script in form and spirit, the other reason for Li Si's return to Scribe Zhou's innovation was that Large Seal represented a rare attempt at script standardization, a feat Li Si aspired to emulate. And just as Scribe Zhou only marginally modified earlier script, Li Si would limit himself to abridgement of Large Seal.¹² Reduction was an entirely sensible course of action, as on the whole Large Seal was characterized by a degree of complexity that could be desirable in elaborate royal inscriptions but was far less suitable for daily use. Formal simplification, however, could lead to the concealment of the nuances of a graph's composition. The relative complexity of Large Seal, even if a drawback from practical point of view, allowed for a greater degree of rationalization. While there is no direct evidence for a developed six principles' theory prior to Liu Xin and the Eastern Han, the systematic appearance of Large Seal suggests this Zhou script could have been underlied by a structural framework.

¹¹ An idea originally put forth by Wang Guowei and reiterated by Bodde (Galambos, 2002, p. 74).

¹² There are, however, also several exceptional cases, noted in Qiu Xigui (p. 64), in which Small Seal consists of a more complex form than Large Seal.

Small Seal vs. clerical script

Li Si's reform represented a viable compromise. On the one hand it was based on a systematized script with an ancient pedigree, on the other hand it was simplified to a point that made it practical. Xu Shen, as a general rule, explains Small Seal forms and supplements them with Ancient Script and Large Seal variants, the later typically adduced to showcase a graph's manner of composition where this cannot be gleaned from the Small Seal. The principal aim is not to promote the earlier script forms, but to rationalize a recent standardization and to moor it in the past.

Xu Shen's endorsement of Li Si and Small Seal contrasts with his attitude to another Qin creation, the clerical script. Seven years, by Sima Qian's count, separate the initial Qin proclamation in regard to unification of measures, writing, etc., and the infamous book burning. Events on the two sides of the temporal divide could not be further apart. The violent discarding of the canons initiates a series of policies that overstretch the bureaucracy, particularly in the penal department. The anonymous clerical script appears, by Xu Shen's reckoning, around this time to facilitate communication between assistant clerks. The new script lacks a connection to the past, an aristocratic pedigree, and an express creator, Xu Shen's hallmarks of all great inventions. Its simplifications not only irretrievably disguise graphic structure, but fundamentally alter the nature of script appearance. For where graphic mimicry, according to Xu Shen's second principle, is based on curving and bending following the shape of an object, with Seal and Ancient Scripts duly twist-and-curling, clerical script embraces the square. As likeness, both to things of the world and to other graphic elements, is the principal means

by which Xu Shen rationalizes graphs, the clerical style's unsuggestive angularity may easily be taken to embody the rival notion of arbitrariness.¹³

Large Seal and Ancient Script

If Large Seal represented the first attempt at a fixed script form, the emergence of Small Seal and clerical style effectively halted the centuries long use and evolution of ancient script. Among the eight forms used under the Qin there is no place for ancient script, and when, two centuries later, "ancient script" is reinstituted as part of Wang Mang's political reform, the term concerns its one specific instantiation, not the idea of evolving form. Let us compare the two respective lists of scripts in use under the Qin and under Wang Mang. Both begin in a historic script form: the Qin list with Large Seal, Wang Mang's list with Ancient Script from the house of Confucius. Xu Shen's criticism of the popular habit of explaining graphs as "inconsistent with the Ancient Writing from the house of Confucius and mistaken in regard to the Script of Scribe Zhou" shows that the principal role of these normative historic scripts at the head of each list was to anchor structural understanding of the more current, simplified forms listed below them. "Not perceiving any system in the way characters were composed" went hand in hand with ignorance of older styles. To a certain extent, style was synonymous with principle.¹⁴

¹³ By this, however, I do not imply, as Richard Cook (2003) does, that Xu Shen advocated the reinstitution of Small Seal in place of clerical script, a practice the modern editor of the *Shuowen* should follow. I take it that Xu Shen, several of whose explanations betray firm rootedness in clerical style, regarded clerical script as a useful shorthand, to be substituted by the corresponding Small Seal when methodical teaching or structural analysis of characters were involved.

¹⁴ Thus Li Chengquan's 酈承銓 (1935) idea that 六書 initially stood for six *styles* of writing may complement rather than contradict the six *principles* interpretation.

In starting from historical awareness, the two lists, as well as Xu Shen who follows their emphasis by including Ancient Graph and Large Seal variants in his work, appear to come close to the diachronic method of the contemporary paleographer. There is, however, a crucial difference. Rather than criticising his contemporaries for being out of touch with a variety of paleographic materials, Xu Shen complains of their being divorced from two particular instances of script use. The Qin preserved Large Seal from the golden days of the Zhou; the wall torn down by King Gong of Lu rendered script used purportedly by Confucius. Large Seal and Ancient Graphs are not isolated instances of character appearance, but synchronic writing systems deployed at two high points of the past.

The graphic misinterpretations adduced by Xu Shen are all based on clerical script, which, due to the absence of historical awareness, is considered by interpreters as a form descended from the ancient sages. While few scholars today would not side with Xu Shen on this matter, the popular practice of his time reflects an attitude preserved from an earlier era. In the time of non-standardized script, scribes would only consider the script appearance of the immediately preceding generation. Their reproduction entailed modifications, ensuring continued transformation. Evolution and continuity were, paradoxically, guaranteed by disregard for the scripts of more distant generations.¹⁵

Where Li Si, Wang Mang, and Xu Shen embraced discontinuity and attempted to transcend the break by targeting ancient forms, other scholars were committed to the idea

¹⁵ In this aspect script may be likened to the evolution of the *taotie* 饕餮 motif on Shang Bronzes. Archaeologists and historians of religion have long speculated on why a royal or an aristocrat carried a set of bronze vessels he had used during his life into the grave. What has largely escaped attention is the consequence of the practice for stylistic evolution. Since bronze vessels of the deceased generations were buried under the ground, the designer could only take the vessels of the immediately preceding generation as his model. The artist mimicked, and, since there is no such thing as a perfect copy, transformed only the latest stage in the evolution of the *taotie* motif.

of the continuity of tradition that sanctioned contemporary understanding. Thus while the method implicit in the two lists of scripts was inherently historical, its application was a modern phenomenon. And, similarly, while most other scholars remained wedded to the present, this attitude had an ancient pedigree.

Different way of explaining graphs was not the only problem Xu Shen had with his contemporaries, their purpose in doing so was also his target. Specifically, Xu Shen objected to the practice of "analyzing the meaning of the classics by means of explaining the characters 競說字解經誼." In contrast to this procedure, which moves from the graphic form to the overall meaning, his entries begin with the general meaning and proceed to graphic analysis. Moreover, his prioritizing of Ancient Script over Large Seal -- in entries where both forms appear Ancient Script, which postdates Large Seal, is listed before the latter -- could well be motivated by the fact that Ancient Script was handed down as part of a particular recording of the classics, which provided characters with a context. Large Seal, on the other hand, was transmitted in the form of a decontextualized character primer. Rather than to dig novel meanings of the classics out of the graphs, Xu Shen aims to moor established meanings in the graphic structure, just as the case of 告 in the previous chapter illustrated. Graphic explanation is a projection, not the source, of exegesis.¹⁶

¹⁶ Xu Shen's emphasis on exegesis comes through a comparison with Ban Gu's essay. To begin with, in his rendering of a Han statute regarding candidate examination, Ban Gu has aspiring functionaries "recite and inscribe over nine thousand characters 諷書九千字以上," while Xu Shen's candidates are able to "recite, *explicate*, and inscribe nine thousand characters 諷籀書九千字." Duan Yucai distinguishes: "諷謂能背誦尉律之文籀書謂能取尉律之義推演發揮 Recite refers to being able to recite the text of a legal decree from memory; to draw out and write refers to being able to grasp the meaning of a statute, to infer and deduce on its basis, and to expound it" (758). Differing versions of statutes of Han times were not uncommon. Consider: (a) *Hanshu* 2, SBBY p. 85 and Zhangjiashan statutes strip no. 82. (b) *Yantie lun* 57, p. 584 and Zhangjiashan statutes 305-6. (c) *Jinshu* 30, p. 924 and Zhangjiashan statutes strip 67. (References provided by Michael Loewe, May 15, 2012.) The other important difference concerns the

The title

The line "elucidate the meaning of the classics by means of explaining characters" forms an illuminating parallel with the title of Xu Shen's composition. While Thern (1966, p. 15) and Bottéro (2002) interpret the two matching constructions through coordinate relationship, I find that in order to make sense of both the practice current in Xu Shen's time and of his title, the instrumental is necessary.¹⁷ The following statement by the Song scholar Zheng Qiao 鄭樵, in which the explicit instrumental particle "by means of" is inserted before the conjunction "explaining graphs," proves that a native interpreter indeed perceived the instrumental in the Xu Shen's title:

獨體爲文合體爲字漢儒知以說文解字而不知文有子母則失制字之旨
Single-bodied make simplex graphs, combined-bodied constitute complex graphs. Han scholiasts knew to analyze compound graphs by means of explaining their simple components,¹⁸ but by not seeing that these primary constituents differentiate into mothers and children, they missed the point of how complex graphs are formed.

scope of interpretation that the various summonings and conventions of experts on graphs entailed. Where Ban Gu considers these to pertain only to obscure graphs, Xu Shen portrays them as reworkings of the entire writing system, concerned with even the basic characters.

¹⁷ The syntactic order of the sentence, where "explain characters" precedes "make out the meaning," is apparently sufficient to convey the instrumental relationship. Afterall, ellipsis of the instrumental marker "the means of 所以" is a common feature of a number of Xu Shen's glosses in Xu Xuan's edition, as in: "Hexagram is related in meaning to prognostication 卦筮也" (卷三 卜部). Certainly, Duan Yucai for one, proposes that the marker was dropped in these cases by an irresponsible copyist, a conjecture motivated by its being preserved in few isolated instances, as in: "Pen is what one writes with 聿所以書也" (卷三 聿部). Consequently, Duan Yucai makes emendations in these situations, as in: "Hexagram is the means by which one prognosticates 卦所以筮也" (127). I find this type of Duan Yucai's corrections unmerited for three reasons. First, the revisions assume that such elliptical glosses represent precise definitions rather than deliberately ambiguous statements of relation. Second, the adjustment leads to a degree of formalization inconsistent with the general variability of gloss openings. Finally, a copyist would have been, just like Duan Yucai, more likely compelled to supply the explanatory particle to rationalize the gloss rather than to add ambiguity by dropping it.

¹⁸ Sticking to coordinate relationship even in the explicit presence of an instrumental particle, Bottéro (2004, p. 5) translates Zheng Qiao as: "Simplex constitute *wen* and complex constitute *zi*. The Han scholars knew that from the *Shuowen jiezi* ..."

In my reading, Zheng Qiao does not refer here just to Xu Shen's work, but identifies a wider Han practice of which the *Shuowen* is one prominent manifestation. The practice consisted in reducing complex graphs into simple, explainable constituents. The Han mind, according to Zheng Qiao, was primarily analytical. Not sufficiently analytical though, for it failed to always differentiate these simple components into those denoting physical shape (mothers) and those carrying sound (children), a distinction Zheng Qiao would develop into a system of his own.¹⁹ Zheng Qiao's ability to paint Han philology as, in essence, analytical rests on his peculiar interpretation of 文 and 字. That taking 文 as single-bodied and 字 as combined-bodied is far from evident from Xu Shen's work²⁰ is

¹⁹ Xu Shen's two domains singled out by Zheng Qiao as failing to make the distinction between mothers and children are 半 and 句. The 半 domain reads: "To part is to split in the middle of a thing. Follows buffalo. Buffalo is a large thing that can be split. All characters in the parting domain follow to part. 𠂔 *bàn* 物中分也从八从牛牛爲物大可以分也凡半之屬皆从半 Steak is a sliced up meat. ... Combines intentions of 'to part' and 'meat,' 'to part' also indicates the sound. 𠂔 *pàn* 半體肉也 ... 从半从肉半亦聲 To betray is to part and flip. Combines intentions of to part and to flip. 'To part' also indicates the sound. 𠂔 *pàn* 半反也从半反半亦聲" (卷二半部 The last entry follows Duan Yucai's emendation, 50)." Both compound graphs included in the 半 domain use the domain heading graph for its sound property. In this they are similar to graphs: "Fán is colorless. 𠂔 無色也从衣半聲 To slice is to split. 𠂔 *pàn* 分也从刀半聲 Bān denotes large appearance. 𠂔 大兒从人半聲, all included in other domains. Similarly, the 句 domain reads: "Sentence is a stanza. Follows mouth and is potentially cognate with characters pronounced like 'to intertwine.' 𠂔 *gōu* 曲也从口𠂔聲凡句之屬皆从句 To arrest is to detain. Combines intentions of 'sentence/loop' and 'hand,' 'sentence/loop' also indicates the sound. 𠂔 *jū* 止也从句从手句亦聲 Arched bamboo basket for catching fish. Combines intentions of 'sentence/loop' and 'bamboo.' 'Sentence/loop' also indicates the sound. 𠂔 *gōu* 曲竹捕魚筍也从竹从句句亦聲 A hook is a bent thing. Combines intentions of 'metal' and 'to curve.' 'Curve' also indicates the sound. 𠂔 *gōu* 曲也从金从句句亦聲" (卷三句部) Once again, all three graphs use the domain heading graph for its sound property. The list of graphs that use 句 for pronunciation and are included in other domains is far longer than in the previous case. Thus even if certain graphs tend to indicate cognitive domain and other graphs tend to express pronunciation, there is also a number of graphs that are used for both these properties. Cognitive and pronunciation categories to a certain extent overlap. This is also evident in that the formula "follows," typically used to identify members of a domain, can also be applied to sound category, as in: "Táo follows 'hide' and is pronounced as 召. Alternatively, the graph follows (i.e., is pronounced like) 兆. 𠂔 ... 从革召聲𠂔或从兆" (卷三 革部). Xu Shen's interpenetration of linguistic and cognitive categories contrasts with the strictly analytical method of Zheng Qiao.

²⁰ Françoise Bottéro (2002, p. 24), having demonstrated the incompatibility of Zheng Qiao's usage with each of the twenty-four occurrences of the terms "*wén*, *zì*, and *wénzì*" in Xu Shen's postscript, has made a case of the discrepancy contending that: "The distinction supposed to be made ... between compound and non-compound characters is in point of fact nowhere in evidence throughout the extensive received text of the *Shuo wen jie zi*, its postface, and the Eastern Han sources relying directly on this work."

attested by the fact that Zheng Qiao finds it necessary to give such explicit definitions. A commentator resorts to a definition when he is resolving a doubt, not when he is restating the obvious. In this case Zheng Qiao develops a line of interpretation initiated by the Tang scholar Xu Kai:

六文之中象形者蒼頡本所起觀察天地萬物之形謂之文故文少後相配合孳益爲字則形聲會意者是也 (說文解字繫傳 卷一 上部 上條 In Ding Fubao, 1932, 5:17)

Among the six types of graphs, mimicking the shape originated with Cang Jie. That which discerns the shapes of the myriad things between Heaven and Earth is called graph/pattern. Because in the past patterns were few in number, later they were matched together, multiplying into characters. Shape-and-sound and combined intentions embody this idea of matching.

Xu Kai's reasoning in turn is based on the Postscript's following paragraph:

When Cang Jie first created writing, relying on category he mimicked the shapes. That is why 'graph' literally means 'pattern,' for pattern makes a thing imitable. Only later, when shape and sound added to one another, could one refer to 'characters.' **Engendered** by language, **characters** gradually multiplied. ...

Xu Shen makes a distinction -- so essential as to merit inclusion in his title --

between graphs and characters. Where graphs consist in imitation of phenomena, characters combine shape and sound, and are linked through pronunciation to nurturing and proliferation. The precise meaning of the term 'character,' which is first documented in a Qin inscription²¹ and only comes to be widely used during the Han,²² depends on how one interprets the line "when shape and sound add up." Building on Xu Kai and Zheng Qiao, Duan Yucai specifies:

²¹ *Offices of the Zhou* "Scribe to the Outside" section, *Classic of Rites*, "Paili" section, the "Zilu" chapter of the *Analects*, all speak of names. When the *Zuo Commentary* states to invert correct is to transgress, to stop a halberd makes martial prowess, and scorpions in a bowl make rotten, it speaks of graphs. Characters are never mentioned in the classics. Characters were initially mentioned in the Qin (Shi Huang's) stone inscription: "I unified graphs and characters of the books." 周禮外史禮經聘禮論語子路篇皆言名左傳反正爲乏止戈爲武皿蟲爲蠱皆言文六經未有言字者秦刻石同書文字此言字之始也 (754)

²² Scribe to the Outside is in charge of spreading the written names to the four quarters. Zheng Xuan comments: In the past they said names, today we say characters. 周禮外史... 掌達書名于四方 鄭注古曰名今曰字 (Quoted in Boltz, 2003, p. 138)

形聲相益謂形聲會意二者也有形則必有聲聲與形相輔爲形聲形與形相輔爲會意其後爲倉頡以後也倉頡有指事象形二者而已其後文與文相合而爲形聲爲會意謂之字如易本祇八卦卦與卦相重而得六十四卦也 (754)

"Shape and sound adding to one another" refers to the two principles of shape-and-sound and of combined intentions. Once there is shape, there has to be sound. The linking up of sound and shape results in the principle of shape-and-sound. The linking up of shape and shape results in the principle of combined intentions. "Later" refers to after Cang Jie. Cang Jie only knew the two principles of pointing an event and mimicking shape. After his time, graph was matched with graph to produce shape-and-sound or combined intentions, the so-called character. This was like *Change* originally only consisting of eight trigrams. By doubling the trigrams, the sixty-four hexagrams were obtained.

The problem with Duan Yucai's logic lies in the inclusion of combined intentions (less than five percent of Xu Shen's graphs) under the rubric of "shape and sound adding to one another." Since the property of sound is not needed to combine intentions, technically speaking only graphs composed on the principle of shape-and-sound (more than 85 percent of graphs) could be termed characters. To circumvent the restriction, Duan Yucai stresses the "adding to one another" aspect at the expense of the "shape and sound" component, and uses an analogy with the production of hexagrams to prop the point.²³

A closer look at Duan Yucai's reasoning, however, reveals that the sentence "once there is shape, there has to be sound" contradicts the rest.²⁴ This is a characteristic Duan Yucai moment. Even if Duan Yucai poses as a critic of Song learning, he was raised on its principles. Consequently, aspects of Song learning, like Zheng Qiao's analytical distinction between simple and complex graphs, go unchallenged by Duan Yucai. But side by side with such curricular understanding, Duan Yucai may add a conflicting insight. Duan Yucai is more of a cumulative than methodical thinker, adding new

²³ Because Xu Shen opens his Postscript with the creation of trigrams, Duan Yucai is entitled to this simile. Thus like Pao Xi, Cang Jie created the basic constituents, the graphs, which later generations added together to produce characters, just like King Wen combined the trigrams into hexagrams.

²⁴ That the statement indeed harbors such contradiction is confirmed by Duan Yucai's editor, who inserts Zheng Qiao's explicit definition to resolve potential ambiguity (754).

observations to the received lore rather than systematically transforming the later. The resulting inconsistencies are of great value to any subsequent interpreter, for they indicate productive tensions within the material.²⁵ In this case, Duan Yucai suggests that once a graph has a shape it must also have a pronunciation. Rather than by combining graphic elements, characters differ from graphs by having shape *and* pronunciation. By adding pronunciation to shape, characters combine cognitive faculty (graphs mimic object categories) with linguistic ability.

Working independently of Duan Yucai, Françoise Bottéro has recently developed a similar insight:

The *wén* have an intrinsic pictorial meaning, the *zì* make the link with pronunciation. ... Adding *shēng* 聲 to *xíng* 形 in Xu Shen's genealogy of writing means assigning pronunciations to graphs and does not mean adding explicit phonetic elements to every graphs. It is all about establishing a pervasive and necessarily link between graphic representations *wén* and words of the Chinese language. *Wén* are graphs and *zì* are graphic representations of spoken words.²⁶

This interpretation, meticulously backed up by evidence, paves way for Bottéro's broader claim that Xu Shen's work exemplifies "two distinct approaches to interpreting writing": "a metaphysical symbolic analysis of graphs," and "a 'linguistic' analysis of characters." Xu Shen's originality, Bottéro argues, lies in his having combined the two.²⁷ Because Bottéro interprets Xu Shen's title through a coordinate relationship, she does not need to specify *how* Xu Shen combined the two methods. Moreover, in Bottéro's account, which follows Zheng Xuan on the matter, there is no substantial difference between 名 (name) of the earlier tradition and 字 (character) of the Han exegete.

²⁵ Incidentally, the idea of the present essay was conceived by detecting discrepancies in Duan Yucai's various usages of the terms 轉注 and 互訓.

²⁶ Bottéro (2002) pp. 28, 24.

²⁷ Ibid. pp. 28-30.

By instead interpreting the title with an instrumental, one is forced to reason out the relationship between "symbolic" and "linguistic" interpretation. The instrumental implies that Xu Shen always interprets *both* the graphic record and the pronunciation of a word, a far cry from the either/or world of earlier exegesis. The instrumental also makes it impossible to accept Zheng Xuan's claim that the switch from 名 to 字 was merely terminological, forcing one to locate a deeper philosophical shift between traditional, name based mode of exegesis and the shape-and-sound method of the *Shuowen*.

The signs of this larger shift are detectable in Xu Shen's peculiar designation of the shape-and-sound 形聲 principle. Interpretation of the name, however, is not straightforward. Since the other three principles concerned with graph composition (indicate event, mimic shape, combine intentions) are construed as verb-noun, the reading "to shape sound" comes to mind first. This analysis is further supported should one read the principle through the lense of Ban Gu's designation, as Duan Yucai does: " Liu Xin and Ban Gu call this principle 'mimic sound.' 'Shape sound' is equivalent to 'mimic sound.' 劉歆班固謂之象聲形聲即象聲也 (755)" In this earlier, mimic the sound understanding, the principle concerns the act of assigning pronunciations to graphs, and underlies the stage of writing in which graphs primarily denoted spoken words. The interpretation "shape and sound" is not based just on the fact that characters classified in this category, such as 江 or 河, combine explicit phonetic and referential components, but also on the idea that any character has both shape and pronunciation. While in the preceding period, the practice of which is reflected in Ban Gu's and Zheng Zhong's designations of the principle, the shape factor of a graph was not necessarily taken into account, graphs being considered representations of words, Xu Shen's emphasis on the

graphic aspect of a recorded word pointed in a new direction. His definition of the principle, also not easy to interpret, supports this reading:

形聲者以事爲名取譬相成 As for the principle of shape and sound, take an event for a name, by grasping the comparison the event and the name complete each other.

To take an event for a name denotes the act of naming a cognition, be it abstract or concrete. The key word in the second part of the sentence is comparison. One can only compare two separate things, hence name cannot be the same as cognition. While cognitive and linguistic categories may overlap in the *Shuowen*, when a particular character is being analyzed, difference is maintained between them.

Where Zheng Qiao's interpretation of the title, as Bottéro has painstakingly shown, contradicts the usage of the terms 文 and 字 in the *Shuowen*, he needs to be given credit for attempting to identify Xu Shen's basic method. The analytical approach, whereby complex graphs are reduced to a limited number of simple, explainable constituents, is indeed an important part of Xu Shen's strategic repertoire. In contrast, today's paleographers typically do not rely on a limited number of graphic components in their explanations, exploiting instead the pictographic aspects of early graphs. But an even more fundamental aspect of his technique, which pertains to all characters and which underlies Zheng Qiao's analytical approach, is the act of relating language and cognition. Characters may multiply by the adding up of simple graphic components, but below what happens on the page lies what happens in the mind. The Han mind generates new concepts through the intersection of cognitive and linguistic categorization. It operates in the first instance relationally, drawing together cognitive and linguistic categorization, only in the second instance analytically.

To restate this differently, when Cang Jie first invented writing, he mimicked shapes according to category. The first patterns did not imitate individual things but classes of objects, such as trees or grasses. Cang Jie's graphs were basic categorizing devices that relied on the cognitive faculty and referred to [categories of] objects by means of visual similarity. Once a cognitive category was named it also became a linguistic category, which, in the case of Han China, opened the possibility of the term being linked to other concepts through sound. As a graph, tree 𣎵 depicts roots, trunk, and branches. As a linguistic utterance, 'tree' can be tied to the idea of 'to cover densely' 𣏟. Graphs differentiated the world into basic cognitive domains; characters, which named these cognitive domains, opened the possibility for a new round of categorizations based on sound similarity. The basic purpose of characters, as conceived by Xu Shen, was to structure the world through cognitive and linguistic categories. In order to zero in on the correct referent of a term, one has to first link it through both shape and sound to other terms within the same system. Sound denotes meaning; shape denotes category of reference. This is why I choose the technical terms *Bedeutungsträger* (linguistic meaning carrier) and *Wahrnehmungszeiger* (cognitive domain indicator) to render the two structural components of Xu Shen's graphic analysis of shape-and-sound characters over other, typically misleading designations current in Western scholarship.

Where Bottéro maintains that Xu Shen mixed two traditional approaches to writing, "an ancient approach which treated these marks as symbols of reality and which dated back to divination by cracks in scapulas and turtle plastrons" and "a linguistic conception which was imposed by the very function of writing -- recording spoken language,"²⁸ I

²⁸ Bottéro (2002) p. 30.

contend that Xu Shen's yoking of shape and pronunciation broke a decisively new exegetical path. In order to demonstrate the incompatibility of the ancient approaches to graphs with Xu Shen's innovative method, let us follow a cue provided by Bottéro in her following claim: "We know nothing about the procedures used by the diviners for interpreting oracular signs, but there can be little doubt that this practice profoundly affected how written signs in China were seen."²⁹ While the diviner's manner of reading signs may no longer be accessible, we have at our disposal Xu Shen's investigation of the divination domain with its heading graph.

The case of cracking

卜 *bǔ* 灼剝龜也象灸龜之形一曰象龜兆之縱橫也凡卜之屬皆从卜 ^h古文卜 (卷三 卜部) **Crack** is to say **fissure** a turtle by **scorching**. The graph mimics the appearance of searing a turtle. Another opinion explains the graph as mimicking the vertical and horizontal omen cracks on a turtle. All members of the 'to crack' cognitive domain follow crack.

Duan Yucai observes that 'scorch' alliterates and 'fissure' rhymes (灼雙聲剝疊韻)

with the entry graph. The pronunciation link between 卜 and 剝 is confirmed by Xu Shen's entry on 剝, which gives an alternative way of writing the character with 卜 in place of 录 as the *Bedeutungsträger* (^h). On the other hand, it is hard to see where the alliterative link between 卜 (幫 labial initial) and 灼 (禪 dental initial) comes from. Given 卜 falls in the 屋 rhyme category (DuanYucai's second) and 灼 in the 沃 rhyme category (Duan Yucai's third), with the two categories often overlapping, rhyme rather than alliteration seems to link the respective pronunciations. In any case, the entry begins with

²⁹ Ibid. p. 29.

a pronunciation based definition that connects the graph to scorching and fissuring. The definition informs subsequent graphic explanation as "seared turtle shell,"³⁰ pitted against an alternative analysis that reads the graph as mimicking a vertical and horizontal omen lines. It is this second explanation, which, incidentally, does not conform to the Ancient Script variant of the graph, that has been adopted by modern paleographers. David Keightley, for example, describes the technique of divination as:

At the moment of divination, the diviner proposed the charge and applied heat to the hollow in the back; this scorched and charred the bone or shell with the result that a *pu* 卜-shaped crack formed on its front. (Keightley, 1978, p. 21)

Keightley's account harbors a contradiction. On the one hand, it notes that the heat source, likely a smoldering hard wood stick or searing bronze poker, was inserted into a prepared hollow in the *back*, on the other hand it observes that a *pu* 卜-shaped crack formed on the *front* of the plastron. Since during the act of cracking the diviner worked on the back of the plastron, in order to view the cracks appearing in the front he had to halt the scorching procedure and turn the turtle over. Generating and inspecting the cracks, based on Keightley's description, were two separate actions punctuated by the act of carapace inversion. Thus Keightley's underlying, seemingly impervious assumption that 卜 denotes both "the *puk*like sound,"³¹ [with which] the turtle, most silent of creatures, speaks"³² and the " 卜-shaped crack" is undermined by his own sentence structure.

³⁰ Duan Yucai develops this graphic explanation as: " The straight vertical line mimics a turtle; the horizontal line mimics severely charred scorched turtle. 直者象龜橫者象楚煇之灼龜 (127)"

³¹ Onomatopoeic word with similar meaning is the Czech *pukat* (to crack) based on a pan-Slavic root. Takashima Kenichi describes an attempt to crack a fresh cow scapula: "... again nothing happened ... I just threw the damn thing in the whole mess of burning charcoal ... the bone began to crack successively -- Pak! Pak! Pak! ... we had truly 'reconstructed' the Archaic Chinese 卜 **pak*." Ibid. p. 21, n. 93.

³² Ibid. p.1.

The presence of a time lag between the sound and the manifestation of a crack is further substantiated by Chang Kuang-yüan's description of, according to Keightley, "the most serious modern attempt to reproduce Shang plastromancy." Having prepared the double hollows with a knife, Chang "placed three burning sticks of incense in the hollow; after twenty-five minutes he heard the first sound of cracking and heard two more crack sounds at the end of thirty-five minutes. When he turned the plastron over, the cracks were still not visible on the front, and they did not appear till the incense had been burning for fifty minutes."³³ Not only does crack inspection require the turning over of the plastron, the initial cracking sounds are not even accompanied by discernible fissures. In fact, equal amount of time is needed from the moment heat source is applied to the plastron to the emitting of a cracking sound as from this first *puk* sound to the actual manifestation of a crack. The voice of the turtle (龜語), a term Keightley believes to have first been used by Hu Hsü,³⁴ substantially anticipates the appearance of omen cracks. And, incidentally, if this voice of the turtle, like all sound, is an inherently transient phenomenon, its record on the smoothened surface of the carapace is only marginally more permanent: "Chang observed that the cracks lost their visibility after five days ..., a fact that helps explain the Shang custom of carving the cracks."³⁵

Xu Shen's association of the graph 卜 with the sound-emitting act of cracking rather than with the deferred omen result is consistent with his analysis of the preceding domain heading graph 支, which takes 卜 for its pronunciation:

³³ Ibid. p. 22, n. 93.

³⁴ 胡煦卜法詳考 In 欽定四庫全書子部 7. 1782-1787. Quoted *ibid.* p. 22, n. 93.

³⁵ Ibid. p. 22, n. 93.

𠂔 *pū* 小擊也从又卜聲 (卷三 又部)

To stroke is to strike lightly. Follows the cognitive domain of right hand and is potentially cognate with words pronounced like to crack.

To crack and to stroke, Xu Shen implies, are cognates. Xu Fu and Song Wenmin

interpret the oracle bone antecedent graph as "mimics a hand grasping a thing by which it

knocks or strikes 象手持物有所敲擊)." ³⁶ The graph is part of a series of domains

branching from the 𠂔 supradomain that include:

𠂔 *shǐ* 記事者也从又持中中正也

𠂔 *zhī* 去竹之枝也从手持半竹

𠂔 *niè* 手之韋巧也从又持巾

𠂔 *yù* 所以書也楚謂之聿吳謂之不律燕謂之弗从 𠂔 一 聲

𠂔 *dài* 及也从又从尾省又持尾者从後及之也

𠂔 *qiān* 堅也从又臣聲

𠂔 *shū* 以投殊人也从又几聲

𠂔 *cùn* 十分也人手卻一寸動衤謂之寸口从又从一

𠂔 *pí* 剥取獸革者謂之皮从又爲省聲

Historian is the person who records **events**. Combines intentions of right hand holding the middle. Middle stands for correct.

To remove a bamboo twig. Depicts a hand grasping a sliced bamboo.

Hand's maximum dexterity. Depicts a hand grasping a piece of cloth.

Pen is what one writes with. In Chu they say *yù*, in Wu they say *búlǚ*, in Yan they say *fú*.

Follows dexterity and is potentially cognate with one.

To capture is to reach. Combines intentions of right hand and simplified tail. A hand grasping a tail denotes the idea of reaching from the back.

Tight is to say **hard**. Follows right hand and is potentially cognate with words pronounced like stretch.

To club is to beat a person to death with a stick. Follows right hand and is potentially cognate with words pronounced like flutter.

An inch is ten units. Human wrist can bend back by one inch. The spot where one checks pulse is called the inch mouth. Combines intentions of right hand and one.

To skin is to splice off animal hide. Follows right hand and is potentially cognate with words pronounced like manipulate.

Five domain graphs are analyzed as combining intentions; four domain graphs are

analyzed as shape-and-sound. Just like in the case of the 攴 domain graph above, Xu Fu

and Song Wenmin dispute all four cases of Xu Shen's sound denoting analysis.

Compared to their oracle bone and bronze script inspired explanations, which relate

³⁶ Xu Fu and Song Wenmin, 2003, p. 74.

pictographs to their purported referents, Xu Shen's analysis consists in reducing complex graphs to a limited number of simple graphic elements, precisely the method Zheng Qiao's interpretation of the title points to. Rather than treating a graph as symbolizing a reality, Xu Shen first attempts to connect a graph to similar looking scriptural elements. The identification of the cognitive supradomain (right hand) allows for the linking of all the above domains. The identification of a sound component is also not self-serving, allowing a graph to be linked through sound to other words and to be interpreted through that link. Pen is linked to one, tight to hard, club to flutter, skin to manipulate. The 'to club' entry resembles 'to stroke' in that in both cases the *Bedeutungsträger* is listed immediately after:

𠂔 *shū* 鳥之短羽飛几几也象形讀若殊

Bird's short wings fluttering in flight *shū-shū* like. Mimics the shape. It is pronounced like to kill.

The graph is explained as mimicking both the shape and the sound of a bird fluttering its wings. The sound allows Xu Shen to posit a connection between the distinct concepts to club and to flutter, to stroke and to crack. Where Xu Fu and Song Wenmin locate the difference between 𠂔 and 𠂔 in the oracle bone depictions of the particular device carried by the right hand, Xu Shen differentiates the two through sound. On the one hand, there is the flutter suggestive of violence, on the other hand, there is the crack suggestive of measured application of force. To a degree, Xu Shen's analysis here is a matter of Seal Script hiding the semblance to a referent. Clerical script variant of this

graph (𠂇) follows this shape-and-sound analysis even further by moving the 𠂇 meaning component from above to the side and replacing 𠂇 with 手.³⁷

Perceiving the 𠂇 component in the 𠂇 graph allows for the transition from 𠂇 cognitive domain to 𠂇 cognitive domain. Both domains are featured in the third scroll, whose unifying theme is instrumentation. Language, cussing one's hands, right hand, peeling the hide, the *li* ritual tripod, cracking the turtle are all means by which humans manipulate the world around them. The combination of pronunciation and graphic ordering allows Xu Shen to contextualize divination. The link to stroking shapes the way in which Xu Shen views the 𠂇 graph.

Another problem with the "cracking refers to the omen cracks" rationalization is that "omen crack" is denoted in the *Zuo Commentary* by the graph 兆 (定 dental initial category; 豪 rhyme category), unrelated in pronunciation to crack (幫 labial initial category; 屋 rhyme category). Xu Xuan's edition of the *Shuowen* interprets 兆 as an Ancient Script variant of the Small Seal graph 𠂇, which it duly places at the end of the 𠂇 domain. Xu Xuan edition's gloss reads:

𠂇 zhào 灼龜坼也从卜兆象形古文兆省

Omen crack is a fracture in a scorched turtle. The character falls in the cognitive domain of to crack, 兆 mimics the shape. 𠂇 In ancient script the cognitive domain indicator is absent.

In general, one needs to be cautious about domain closing graphs, which often represent interpolations. One's suspicion about this particular graph is fueled by the unorthodox analysis of the seal graph that combines a cognitive domain classification with mimicking the shape identification, not a type of analysis one regularly finds in the

³⁷ This, just like the case of 𠂇 noted at the start of the third chapter, betrays the degree to which Xu Shen's way of analyzing characters, despite his preference for Small Seal, is indebted to clerical script.

Shuowen. Duan Yucai provides textual basis and an extensive rationalization to the doubt.

In essence:

廣韻兆治小切引說文分也此可證孫愐以前𠄎即兆矣 (49)

The *Guangyun* assigns 治小 pronunciation to the graph and quotes a *Shuowen* definition of the graph as 'to split'. ... This proves that before Sun Mian (Tang) 𠄎 was the same as 𠄎 (which falls in the 八 domain and is glossed as 分).

Not only are cracking and omen crack two different things in Xu Shen's system, they are also classified in separate cognitive domains. The general sense of characters included in the cracking/divination cognitive domain is to ask. The general sense of the 八 domain is to differentiate. Posing the question and reading the answer are two different things. The cracks in the plastron may be the result of cracking, but do not record the sound of cracking. The sound and the pattern are two sides of the plastron. Sound connects, pattern differentiates.

Based on oracle bone usage, there is no doubt that the Shang scribe denoted the act of cracking and the result of the act with the same graph. The graph referred to an activity, the agent, and the result, and likely was pronounced in various ways. In the *Zuozhuan*, omen crack was named through its function; in oracle bone script, it was named through appearance. If on oracle bones, at a particular stage of the evolution of the writing system, 𠄎 could be read both as to crack and to minutely differentiate, both to ask and to make out the answer, in the *Zuozhuan*, where graphs were used primarily to denote words, homeosemy was no longer permissible. The pronunciation of the graph determined its reference, the reference in turn decided how Xu Shen interpreted a graph. Far from returning to an ancient way of seeing graphs, Xu Shen's way of reading graphs was shaped by pronunciation and the kind of associations this pronunciation suggested. By connecting through graphs, Xu Shen extended linguistic analysis and its principles into

the reading of graphs. The advantage of using graphs rather than sound as the means of character analysis was that graphs allowed the interpreter not just to connect (the new function), but also to differentiate. Afterall, differentiation was the basis of 'graph 文' both in Xu Shen's Postscript and his entry on the term. The sound of a word, on the other hand, could not, in the mind of a Han exegete, be further analyzed.

By putting characters, i.e., linguistic signs, at the end of his title, Xu Shen announces his principal target is the spoken language. While other scholars focused on language may ignore the specifics of its graphic record, afterall, the record exists only in so far as it writes down words, Xu Shen makes the formal aspects of the written record the basis for interpreting words, hence the instrumental "by means of explaining the graphs" in the title. The character form is not arbitrary. Thus a word is first related to a graphic sign and only then associated with the particular actuality it denotes. Characters mediate between language and perception.

Chapter Five. Convergence

"Establish a category heading; like intended members will reciprocate:
考 venerable: deceased father 老 old: grayed septuagenarian"

Simply looking at the definition, it is hard to miss that the fifth principle concerns category formation, i.e., the process through which discrete entities of the world come to be conceived as constituents of sets. In this sense convergence underlies principles posited earlier: Cang Jie categorized things before mimicking them, entities were sorted before their intentions combined. Even the act of classifying characters according to their constitution requires the notion of categorization. The reason why the fifth principle has not yet been convincingly interpreted in the general sense of categorization may lie in Xu Shen's unconventional approach to categorization, aspects of which can already be detected in the problematic relation between the principle's definition and example.

That a tension may exist between Xu Shen's definitions of the six principles and their respective examples has been suggested by Atsuji Tetsuji.¹ Atsuji observes that all six definitions are comprised of four-character rhyming couplets. Since this is the only place in the Postscript featuring rhymed statements, Atsuji proposes Xu Shen inherited the definitions from an earlier tradition and added his own examples to them.² Consequently, a creative interpreter looking to root a theory of convergence exclusively on Xu Shen's example may feel justified to ignore the definition. However, given no contradiction between demarcation and instantiation is detectable in the other five

¹ Atsuji (1981) p. 3.

² "令 command; district chief" and "長 far and long: regional chief," Xu Shen's two examples of extension, further support Atsuji's claim, as they are based on titles introduced during the Qin rather than on the earlier classical tradition from which the six principles purportedly derive.

principles, it is preferable to assume that the definition and the example, even if of disparate origin, correspond to one another. The clues for reconstructing Xu Shen's vision of the six principles are agonizingly few, to allow some to infringe on other effectively renders the project impossible. Nevertheless, Atsuji's insight that Xu Shen may have formulated convergence in deliberate response to an earlier tradition is worth pursuing.

Approaching Standard

The first six words of the definition have been taken up by Dai Zhen as evidence that Xu Shen modeled convergence on the practice of glossing words from classical texts as seen in the *Approaching Standard*. To "establish a category heading for like intended members" is to set up a general semantic field, such as beginning, into which more specific words, like head or foundation, used in a particular context with the intention of beginning, may enter. In a similar vein, Duan Yucai posits that: "*Approaching Standard* and *Dialects* are the means by which convergence and substitution were invented. ... The first three chapters of *Approaching Standard* consist of converging glosses."³

One aspect of the method employed by the *Approaching Standard* is the dichotomy between the word(s) being glossed and the glossing term. While the particular intention of the glossed word(s) is governed by the meaning of the glossing term, no such influence extends in the opposite direction. The thirty-nine designations for 'large' may specify the connotations of the overarching concept, but do not alter the basic fact that 'large' is large. That is to say, a ready-made net of semantic fields is transposed onto a

³ 爾雅方言所以發明轉注假借 (1) 釋故言訓皆轉注也 (555)

body of linguistic material which it structures without being substantially modified back by it.

This fixed frame aspect of the *Standard* allows the work to anchor linguistic usage in a stratified conceptual space and to bring together unconnected glosses under joint headings. One outcome of this particular compilation process is that in many, but not all, entries, glossed words subsumed under a single heading are not expected to interact. To give an example, the fact that the entry "希寡鮮罕也" is followed by the gloss "鮮寡也" (釋詁 75) shows that the appearance of 鮮 and 寡 under the same heading does not guarantee a meaningful connection between the two words: the editors had to link the terms separately by including a further gloss. In more technical terms, the statement "A and B are used in the intention of X" does not imply that "X is used in the intention of A" or that "A is used in the intention of B."

"Receive each other," the last two characters of Xu Shen's definition, on the other hand, point to a relationship characterized by mutuality, a detail corroborated in the body of Xu Shen's composition where "old: greyed septuagenarian" is glossed as "venerable: deceased father" and vice versa. By rendering convergence as "mutual explanation 互訓," Dai Zhen accentuates this last part of the definition. Following his teacher's emphasis, Duan Yucai will reserve the explicit identification "this is a case of convergence" for glosses that exhibit precisely this aspect of two-way transference.

In contrast to my above analysis, Duan Yucai sees mutual transference as a characteristic feature of terms subsumed under a single *Standard* heading:

建類一首謂分立其義之類而一其首如爾雅釋詁第一條說始是也同意相受謂無慮諸字意旨略同義可互受相灌注而歸於一首如初哉首基肇祖元胎俶落權輿其於義或近或遠皆可互相訓釋而同謂之始是也 ... 是十一者通謂之始非一其首而同其異字之義乎 (755-6)

"To establish a category heading" is to say differentiate categories of meaning and then unite their heading. Like the opening entry of *Approaching Standard* being explained as beginning. "Like-intended members will reciprocate" is to say regardless of the degree of intended similarity, the meanings of various characters can give-and-take, or pour into, one another and return back to the same heading. Like the end of a thread, sprout, head, building foundation, opening, ancestral temple, primal, first trimester of pregnancy, fade away,⁴ and the two archaic expressions for beginning, whether they are close or distant in meaning, all may be mutually explained and also taken to refer to beginning. ... The eleven glossed terms are all connected by referring to beginning. It is not the case that one makes them fall into the same heading and then unites the meanings of these different characters.

According to Duan Yucai, terms are first differentiated and classed according to their meaning. A heading is formed and named through an explanation. Whether a linkage exists between glossed terms, as Duan Yucai maintains, or not, as I argue above, depends on the particular entry. But even from Duan Yucai's perspective, such linkage is not a sufficient feature for the existence of a heading: the terms must also all *refer* to beginning. In other words, the existence of a particular semantic heading, and the resulting relationship between its members, must be rooted in a common reference point.

In recognizing shared referent as the fundamental aspect of *Approaching Standard*, Duan Yucai builds on the authoritative Jin 晉 Dynasty commentator Guo Pu 郭璞, who characterizes the work in the following way:

夫爾雅者所以通詁訓之指歸 ... 總絕代之離詞辯同實而殊號者也 (爾雅注序)
Approaching Standard is the means by which the aims of ancient exegesis are brought together, ... expressions dating from different periods united, and diverse designations for the same actualities differentiated.

Apart from pointing out the respective actuality, or, reference, as the channel that allows for the linking and subsequent differentiation of distinctive designations, Guo Pu also recognizes the inherent diachronicity of the work: many of the glossed terms can be linked and their differences explained by virtue of language conventions changing in time.

⁴ By means of antonymic gloss (反訓).

One more characteristic of the *Standard*, brought up by Zhang Yi 張揖 of the Wei 魏

Dynasty, is the glossary's concern with the spoken, rather than written, word:

孔子曰爾雅以觀於古足以辯言矣 (廣雅序)

Confucius said: In discerning antiquity, *Approaching Standard* is sufficient for differentiating words.

The restriction to spoken language is significant in the context of the *Standard's* relation to the six principles. For if the last two principles derive from the *Standard*, they must concern ways of using words rather than ways of using writing. Consequently, Dai Zhen and Duan Yucai are forced to clearly separate the four principles governing the internal constitution of graphs (體) from the two principles pertaining to usage (用). The need to distinguish between form and usage in a general sense is reflected in a large number of Duan Yucai's glosses that aim to emend Xu Shen's text in places where, in Duan Yucai's view, the grammatical conjunction "by means of" is missing. As in "ladle is to scoop 挹取也 (卷十四 勺部)" emended by Duan Yucai to "ladle is the means by which one scoops 所以挹取也" with the comment: "Ladle is the name of a utensil. To scoop is how it is used. By dropping 'by the means of' the editors confused the distinct purposes of form and function. 勺是器名挹取者其用也刪所以則體用溷義矣 (715)" Following through with this type of reasoning, convergence and substitution have no bearing on the manner of graphic or phonological analysis and vice versa. That Duan Yucai, who again and again recognizes the inter-relatedness of graphic structure, pronunciation, and word meaning, would be unlikely to subscribe to this conclusion illustrates the inconsistency of his own position. In contrast to such clear cut, and anachronistic, form-and-function dichotomy, I view the relation between convergence and extension as paradigmatic for the manner in which the remaining four principles are

employed. In other words, principles governing graphic analysis are developed out of a particular way of dealing with spoken words.

If the suitability of Xu Shen's definition to *Standard* glosses is an open question, the aptness of his example is even more problematic. To begin with, while Xu Shen's work frequently incorporates *Standard*'s glosses, such as 元始也 允信也 宮室也, 考老也 is not one of them. Consequently, Duan Yucai focuses on the opening entry of the *Standard* and then uses it as a prism through which to view Xu Shen's example: even if 考老也 is technically not a gloss that appears in the *Standard*, it fulfills the criteria of a *Standard* gloss. This seemingly obvious point, however, has been challenged. Liu Dengting 廖登廷, for example, argues that 老 does not fully capture the meaning of 考, while 考 cannot be substituted in the meaning of 老.⁵ Whether that is indeed the case is a matter of linguistic feel at the time, and from our today's vantage point inconclusive. Nevertheless, the fact is Xu Shen chooses an example NOT appearing in the *Standard*. Had he simply adopted coverage from the classic glossary, as Duan Yucai maintains, one would expect him to include an example taken from there. Xu Shen's prototypical formula 考老也 may well convey different type of information than the same construction appearing in a heterogeneous glossary like the *Standard*.

Moreover, in approaching Xu Shen's example as if it were a *Standard* gloss, Dai Zhen and Duan Yucai ignore another link between the two terms, namely, proximity of their respective headings: in Xu Shen's graphic composition, greyed septuagenarian and deceased father stand only eight entries apart. Now, proximity of related terms is, as I shall soon demonstrate, a feature characteristic of mnemonic lists such as the *Cang Jie*

⁵ 六書說 In Ding Fubao (1931) 3:123.

Chapters. Where Xu Shen never mentions the *Standard* in his Postscript, *Cang Jie Chapters* stem from the very tradition he professes to continue. One reason for Dai Zhen's and Duan Yucai's failure to take this work into account in their assessment of convergence is their lacking access to a reliable Han copy of the *Cang Jie Chapters*, the transmission of which was discontinued during the Tang, if not before.⁶

A break in transmission should not in itself permanently obscure the nature of a text: other lost works were reconstructed during the Qing era by culling quotations. The problem with the *Cang Jie* is that, because quotations are by nature fragmentary, only individual glosses, a secondary aspect added to the *Cang Jie* starting from Yang Xiong (likely under the influence of the *Standard*), would be preserved. In other words, the echoes of the *Cang Jie* that Dai Zhen detected in sources like the *Jade Chapters* were more likely to confirm than to challenge his conjecture that Xu Shen worked within a tradition essentially derived from the *Standard*.

⁶ One obstacle to a faithful transmission of the Han version of the *Chapters* is that this lexicographic tradition is characterized by evolution, rather than conservation (like the *Classics*) or accretion (like the *Approaching Standard*), both aspects more conducive to the preservation of a text in its original form. This is evident from how Yang Xiong's and then Du Lin's exegetical works effectively supplanted earlier word lists, a trend continued by Xu Shen and his contemporary Jia Fang 賈魴, the author of the *Pangxi Chapters* 滂喜篇. The works of Yang Xiong, Du Lin, and Jia Fang came to be combined (possibly by Jia Fang himself) into a work of 7,380 characters known as the *Three Cangs* 三蒼, re-edited by Zhang Yi 張揖 and glossed by Guo Pu 郭璞. The keen interest of these two giants of the *Approaching Standard* scholarship -- Zhang Yi with the *Broadening Standard* 廣雅 expanded the ancient glossary, while Guo Pu's commentary was canonized under the Tang -- in the *Cangs* shows the interconnectedness of the two lines of classical lexicography. While the *Cangs* are still widely quoted in Gu Yewang's 顧野王 *Jade Chapters* 玉篇 (completed in 543), the text was apparently lost by the late Tang. Incidentally, the decline of interest in the *Cangs* could be inversely proportional to the fortunes of Xu Shen's composition, his work gradually displacing Jia Fang's. Moreover, the evolving aspect of the *Cangs* also signals that Xu Shen's text, which was part of that same tradition, may have been handed down in a similarly fluid form. The notorious editorial slighthands implemented by Li Yangbing 李陽冰, which Xu Xuan's collation work attempted to excise, could have been symptomatic of the general manner of the text's transmission rather than of the idiosyncracies of one particular editor. This would support Duan Yucai's characteristically critical, and widely criticized, attitude to Xu Xuan, whose recension, in light of the above discussion, was based on pre-Tang but not Han versions of the *Shuowen*. (The factual background for my argument here follows Greatrex, 1994.)

Cang Jie Chapters

The 1977 discovery of a substantial -- with 540 characters constituting about 20 percent of the entire work -- part of early Han (dated to before 165 B.C.) copy of the *Cang Jie Chapters* at Fuyang 阜陽, which followed fragmentary discoveries of more or less the same Han primer near Dunhuang 敦煌 and at 居延 Juyan (in 1930s), puts us in a better position to assess Xu Shen's indebtedness to this earlier tradition of character primers. Hu Pingsheng 胡平生 and Han Ziqiang 韓自強 (1983), the principal collators of the Fuyang finds, identified the following two features of the text: formally, characters are grouped into quartets, with two quartets (occasionally one or three) ending in a rhyming word; semantically, characters link up into sequences that can be described as being in declarative mode 陳述式 or listing/sorted mode 羅列式, the latter further subdivided into four types. Fukuda Tetsuyuki 福田哲之(1989) provides an illustrative synopsis of Hu and Han's analysis of the *Cang Jie's* semantic arrangement. (See Fig. 3.)

On the basis of meticulous analysis of individual strips and, where strips can be linked, of their series, Fukuda introduces a finer distinction into Hu and Han's declarative/sorting dichotomy, namely, of connected text:

- I. 陳述式形態 Declarative mode pattern
- II. 連文式形態 Connecting mode pattern
- III. 羅列式形態 Listing/sorted mode pattern

The first obvious feature of the *Cang Jie Chapters* is the absence of explanations of individual terms. This absence, however, does not imply that meaning is ignored in the list. Each term is anchored in the context in which it appears, be it a declarative statement, linking of related terms, or classification by kind. Exegesis is not stated explicitly, but implied by the location, i.e., function, of a term in the list. This aspect contrasts with Duan Yucai's observation:

字形字音之書若大史籀著大篆十五篇殆其一耑乎字義之書若爾雅其取著者也 (755)
Books on the shape and pronunciation of characters like the *Large Seal in Fifteen Chapters* penned by the great scribe Zhou lack one of the aspects. A book devoted to the meaning of characters like the *Approaching Standard* best manifest this [missing aspect].

Rather than pinning down the meaning of a term, as the *Standard* does, the compilers of the *Cang Jie Chapters* suggest its connotations by relating it to terms with similar meaning. Meaning is, by nature of the technique, indefinite. Starting with strip C015, there is the plant category with four (but likely eight) entries, land based animals with eight entries, reptiles or water animals, manners of catching animals. Looking at the last category, there are four pairs of near synonyms: to catch into a hole, to catch by means of a hook, to catch into a basket-like trap, to catch with a net. The four pairs make up a larger category of trapping. The sequence of verbs or means is related to the sequence of animals that precede it.

The absence of definition attached to a term or a group of terms leads to an approach in which words are listed in a particular cluster because their meanings are related rather than identical. Category heading is not named and then members subsumed under it; rather, as words are placed next to each other, the permeable contours of a category emerge. There are no preexisting categories into which words are fitted.

In differentiating connected text from sorted text, Fukuda stresses that two terms are not simply juxtaposed: they are linked. The difference between linking and juxtaposition, Fukuda clarifies, lies in unfolding vs. stating. When one term is glossing the other, it simply states the first term's meaning. The glossing term pins down the glossed term. When the distinction between glossing and glossed is absent, the two terms approach one another, causing each other to unfold in a particular way. For Fukuda, the relation between members of pairs such as "to open and to close 開閉" (C028) is paradigmatic for relation between clusters of sorted terms. So just as two characters with similar (or opposite, etc.) meanings link up (陷阱), the resulting pair joining with another pair (陷阱 鈎釣), and the four connecting with another four (陷阱鈎釣[竹會]筍[𪛗音]置), so clusters of sorted terms also come together. The fragmentary nature of the finds, with each strip consisting of a relatively small number of characters, makes it difficult to reconstitute sequences longer than sixteen characters. Nevertheless, in the few instances where adjacent strips were found and Fukuda was able to piece them together (C015 and C013), there emerges a possibility of larger clusters combining into a narrative. Once individual terms or clusters of terms are seen as linked rather than juxtaposed, once the reader is able to piece together a narrative out of fragments, the lexical edifice begins to move. Land animals transition into water animals, the transition confirmed by a cluster of verbs with the general meaning of "to hunt."

Fukuda does not dispute that the two poles identified by Hu and Han exist: there are narrative sequences that open each chapter, and there are discrete clusters of terms. Connected text, a concept introduced by Fukuda, is an exegetical tool that mediates between the two extremes: the reader decides whether terms or clusters link up into a

narrative or remain discrete. The fact that each of the three constitutive *Cang Jie* chapters begins with a narrative sequence suggests that linkage is the primary way in which the following clusters are to be read. Terms and clusters are not self-contained units but look to open a connection outside. Words are arranged in such a way that one cannot miss pairs or clusters, these are more or less explicit, but also in a way that these clusters wait to be connected beyond themselves. The consequence of listing words as part of a narrative flow is that the meaning of individual terms tends somewhere rather than stays in one place. Meaning extends beyond the term and, once it is added, the definition.

In contrast, entries in the *Approaching Standard* are arranged by category into nineteen chapters. After the first three abstract chapters of "Explaining Ancient Terms," "Explaining Glosses," and "Explaining Words" come the more concrete chapters of "Explaining: Kin, Palace, Utensils, Music, Heaven, Lands, Hills, Mountains, Rivers, Grass, Trees, Insects and Reptiles, Fish, Birds, Wild Mammals, and Domestic Animals." Each category may be divided into subcategories, for example kin is parted into paternal relations, maternal relations, in-laws, etc. (4.1, 4.2, 4.3) Some glosses may be related, such as: "烈績業也 績勳功也 功績質登平明考就成也." (1.70) Nevertheless, in general, a heading is established and terms are subsumed under that heading; the purpose of each entry is to define a particular term. Glosses are arranged into broad categories with clear boundaries. The *Standard* embodies classical categorization in the Aristotelean sense. A term is found within a gloss because this is what the term, in certain circumstances, means. Categories and meanings are discrete. Integral part of this collection of classical glosses is semantic multivalence of terms: glossed characters may appear in several loan or extended senses. On the other hand, the defining term is featured in its basic sense.

The *Standard* assumes readers know the basic meanings of the defining terms, i.e., that they share a common referential frame.

In the *Cang Jie*, the compiler (or the reader) links two terms so as to unfold rather than define them. Fukuda observes that, typically, nouns are sorted while verbs and adverbs are linked. Whether the reader perceives a semantic net or a narrative flow is a matter of perspective. Terms in their verbal sense flow into each other, in their nominal sense they contrast. Linkage, however, is primary, for without a narrative a structure ceases to unfold. Narrative allows structure to emerge out of the material. The absence of narrative, on the other hand, leads to the *Standard* arrangement based on the problematic [Song] supposition that "structure exists before anything else 空中有理." Moreover, when terms or clusters of terms are linked rather than sorted, change in one will effect changes in others.

And, equally important, in a lexical system that treats terms as potentially connected, the decision *not* to associate terms introduces vital starting points.

Approaching Standard and Cang Jie Chapters came into being in opposed ways. The *Standard* gathered glosses and then sorted them according to topics; the *Cang Jie* linked terms and then defined them. The *Standard* began in analysis; the *Cang Jie* in connecting. The *Cang Jie* teaches the student to understand a meaning by first realizing what a term is linked to; the *Standard* by defining the term. Moreover, linkage is facilitated by adjacency and as such applies to basic meanings. Definition, on the other hand, is based on overlap and as such often relies on extension. Extended sense allows for substitutability (in certain circumstances term A may appear in the meaning of term B), basic meanings are unsubstitutable: there are no perfect synonyms in a language.

The *Cang Jie* not only evolved out of a different purpose than the *Standard*, it also built on a distinct philosophy. The *Standard* expresses a worldview of discrete entities marshalled together: things are strewn around and then piece by piece assembled into an ordered whole. In the *Cang Jie*, which begins by searching out a relation, order emerges as an elastic phenomenon. Convergence, understood as the principle that underlies connected text type, enables alike, adjacent terms or clusters of terms to affect each other. The *Standard*, on the other hand, is built on the dual premise of identity and difference.

In the *Standard*, the meaning of a defining term is inherent; in the *Cang Jie*, basic meaning depends on the context in which the term appears in the primer. The *Standard* looks for meaning inside a term; the *Cang Jie* shapes the meaning of a term by perceiving similarity outside it. If words and things are taken to possess inherent essences, then how one likens them does not change what they are. If identity is tied to similarity, likening a term transforms it. Where the compilers of the *Standard* pitched terms to determinate meanings, the composers of the *Cang Jie* colored terms by linking their indefinite senses.

Another conspicuous aspect of the Fig. 4. examples of the *Cang Jie Chapters* is graphic criterion. Characters are linked into pairs or clusters when they share cognitive domain indicator, a property limited to written characters. As excavated materials amply show, the *Wahrnehmungszeiger* was a highly variable phenomenon during the Warring States period. While the pronunciation/meaning part of a shape-and-sound character tended to be conservative, the cognitive domain indicator often varied from text to text. The form conscious aspect of character primers could have well contributed to the increased importance of the non-linguistic component. In using a shared graphic element

to link up characters, the *Cang Jie* laid the foundation for Xu Shen's graphic arrangement and analysis, again not an aspect necessarily recognized by Duan Yucai:

倉頡訓纂 ... 急就 ... 諸篇僅以四言七言成文皆不言字形原委以字形爲書俾學者因形以考音與義實始於許 (1)

The *Compilation of Cang Jie Exegesis*, the *Jijiu*, and books similar to these are configured by means of clusters of four or seven words. Neither of these works explains the nuts and bolts of character shape. To use character shape as the basis for a book and to teach scholars to examine sound and meaning in dependance on shape only begins with Xu Shen.

It is true that character primers did not include explicit graphic analysis. Nevertheless, by arranging characters on the basis of shape the *Cang Jie* stressed its importance. The opening part of the *Jijiu Chapters* highlights the degree to which the act of structuring vocabulary was seen as the primary purpose of character primers:

急就奇觚與眾異羅列諸物名姓字分別部居不雜廁

The *Jijiu* is unique, truly different from all other books. It organizes the various names, surnames, and style names of things and differentiates domains so that they would not intermingle.

Unlike Duan Yucai, I see a direct connection between the act of using character shape to categorize vocabulary on the one hand and graphic analysis on the other. For example, Xu Shen's analysis of the graph 𠂔 as consisting of man's 𠂔 hair 𠂔 turning 𠂔 white is occasioned by the proximity of these four graphs in the eighth scroll. In fact, in many of Xu Shen's glosses, analysis proceeds from the way in which cognitive domains are ordered (with either similarity of graphic appearance suggesting a meaning connection, or range of characters within a particular cognitive domain determining the domain graph's connotations), an aspect of his method typically overlooked by modern epigraphers. In approaching Xu Shen as someone who continues an earlier tradition, it may well be worth keeping in mind the following points from the *Cang Jie*: the formation of a category by the linking of kindred terms, the absence of a category heading, the permeability of categories and the lack of clear boundaries, the dual arrangement aspect

of narrative and classification, and the use of cognitive domain indicator as a basis for classification. Once all things are regarded as in some way connected, a worldview to which the character primers for practical reasons ascribe, a work that aspires to organize the totality of classical vocabulary like the *Shuowen* will need to both unfold as a narrative and to be sorted contrastively. Moreover, once all characters are properly arranged, it becomes possible to look for the one basic meaning of each term. Writing has to be ordered before its parts can be analyzed: analysis proceeds from relating.

One final point. Unlike the *Standard*, where many glosses are based on the diachronic reasoning of the type "term A was used at an earlier time in the meaning of term B," the *Cang Jie* lacks the formal capacity for identifying different time strata. The primer is based on a synchronic model in which likeness takes the place of causality. Synchronicity reflects the attitude expressed in the opening paragraph of the Commentary: success and failure are not so much a result of past actions as of present associations. The Commentary stresses the manner in which things mix at a particular instant of time, rather than the mode in which they evolve over time. Certainly, words do maintain a certain identity, but they also undergo change of that identity through time. Whether one stresses the aspect of identity or the aspect of change is a matter of emphasis. In places where Xu Shen's graphic definitions contradict the findings of modern epigraphers, one needs to be careful not to confuse two incompatible approaches. Today's paleographers work with the supposition that a character preserves its identity over time. By identifying the oldest form of a character, and by using their imagination to determine what that form depicts, they seek graphic etymologies of discrete terms. Xu Shen, building on the earlier tradition of character primers, on the other hand, uses one specific form of script (Small

Seal) and locates graphic connections across this one synchronic system. In fact, it is not farfetched to apply Martin Kern's following characterization of the *Rituals of Zhou* to Xu Shen's *Shuowen*: "Its fiction is to synthesize and recast ... diachronic and fragmentary knowledge as a synchronic and comprehensive blueprint of government."⁷

Kao lao

The two immediate problems in treating 'venerable: deceased father' and 'old: greyed septuagenarian' as the kind of gloss that would appear in *Approaching Standard* are their mutual explanation and lack of synonymy. The two terms appear in the *Standard* in the following four glosses:

功績質登平明考就成也 (1.70)

In its extended meaning, 考, [along the other seven terms], may be used in the sense of 'to complete.'

父爲考母爲妣 (4.1.1)

By definition, 考 designates deceased father, 妣 designates deceased mother.⁸

黃髮齠齒鯨背耆老壽也 (1.14)

Pale-haired, baby-toothed, scaly-backed, wrinkled, old are used in the sense of longevity.⁹

耄老也 (2.153)

Aged refers to old.

In contrast to Duan Yucan's *Standard* based definition, Zhang Taiyan specifies the following two aspects of convergence:

說文於義同音同部首同者必聯綿屬綴此許君之微意也

⁷ Kern (2010) p. 79.

⁸ For the specification of deceased, see the *Shuowen* entry: "妣歿母也。"(卷十二 女部)

⁹ One cannot say pale-haired in place of baby-toothed unless one first understands both are used to express old age, i.e., that the two terms share a common referent.

Explaining the Graphs holds that considerations of same meaning, same pronunciation, and same cognitive domain indicator must all be tied together. That is Xu Shen's subtle idea.

類即聲類不謂五百四十部也首謂聲首不謂凡某之屬皆从某也 (章炳麟 轉注假借說)
Category is to say sound category, it does not refer to [*Shuowen*'s] 540 cognitive domains.
Heading refers to sound heading, it does not refer to the formula "in general, all those in a particular domain follow that particular graph."

Zhang Taiyan's first line identifies three aspects of Xu Shen's example and demands they be considered in conjunction. His second condition, pertaining to Xu Shen's definition, identifies categorization on the basis of sound similarity as the basic feature of convergence. The first statement is aimed at Duan Yucan's overly broad view of convergence;¹⁰ the second raises polemic with another influential view that sees convergence as pertaining to Xu Shen's introduction of 540 cognitive domains. Zhang Taiyan's second argument finds support in Xu Shen's example in two ways. First, the two constituents of the example are listed in the order 考老, that is to say, in an order inverted to the one in which they appear in Xu Shen's composition where 老 comes eight terms before 考. The sequence of the two constituents is based on the place of articulation of their respective initials: 考's initial is velar, 老's initial is dental/alveolar. Pronunciation is easier when moving from inside out, from 'k' to 'l.' Sound thus governs the example. Moreover, with four sound glosses in ten entries, the domain stands far above the average eight percent rate of sound glosses.¹¹ Second, if the subsuming of all characters appearing in a particular domain under the domain graph were intended, Xu Shen would need to link 老 with the last character in its domain, i.e., 孝 filial piety, rather than the penultimate 考, or to choose an example from another domain.

¹⁰ "'To establish a category heading' is to say make its meaning category into one. 'Like-intended members reciprocate' is to say mutually share an exegesis. 一其義類所謂建類一首互其訓詁所謂同意相受也" (398)

¹¹ Total number of sound glosses in the *Shuowen* based on Deng Tingchen (1936).

Let us examine this particular cognitive domain in detail:

考也七十曰老从人毛匕言須髮變白也凡老之屬皆从老

年八十曰耄从老省从至

年九十曰𦍋从老从蒿省

老也从老省旨聲

老人面凍黎若垢从老省句聲

老人面如點也从老省占聲讀若耿介之耿

老人行才相逮从老省易省行象讀若樹

久也从老省聲

老也从老省丂聲

善事父母者从老省从子子承老也

Old is to say **venerable**. A person in his seventies is referred to as old. The graph combines the intentions of man, hair, and to change, i.e., hair and beard turn white.

A person in his eighties is referred to as *dié*.

A person in his nineties is referred to as *mào*.

Aged is related to old.

Gǒu: an old person's face weathered black as if **dirty**.

Diàn: an old person's face as if **dotted with specks**.

Shù: an old person able to walk only by dragging foot to foot. It reads like tree/planted.

Aged is related to lasting.

Venerable is to say old.

A person who serves well his parents is referred to as filial. Combines intentions of old and child, i.e., an offspring supports the old.

The domain graph entry neatly illustrates the various kinds of information one may glean from Xu Shen's gloss. First, the gloss relates the character to another character. In this particular case, the related terms rhyme and fall into the same cognitive domain. Second, the term is defined contrastively through a referent vis-a-vis the two terms that follow it. Finally, the graph is analyzed into constituent parts, the specific analysis facilitated by the domain graph's place in Xu Shen's composition: vague similarity of appearance of the upper part of the graph to 𦍋 facilitates transition from the preceding domain, while its identification as hair allows for the 𦍋 domain to follow. The

identification of 𠂔 and 𠂔 components is in line with the occurrence of these two graphs in the earlier part of the eighth chapter.¹²

The domain may be subdivided into three sets of characters: the first set consists of four characters with the general meaning of old; the second set is made up of three characters describing aspects of old age; and the third set comprises three loosely related characters. In regard to the first set, broadly speaking, the four characters refer to old. Narrowly speaking, in the first three terms referents are distinguished through the respective decade. In the fourth term the precise age is not specified. This is not a case of Xu Shen lacking support for such distinction. Duan Yucai notes: "In the *Quli*, a person in his sixties is called *qí* 曲禮六十曰耆," and goes on to explain: "The reason why Xu Shen does not set this specification is because he takes *qí* to be a cover term for all ages above seventy. 許不言者許以耆爲七十以上之通稱" (398)

Where members of the first set refer to the age aspect of old, the three members of the following set describe its various manners of appearance. In the first two cases, Xu Shen's respective definitions play on sound similarity: *gǒu* is pronounced like dirty, *diàn* is pronounced like dotted.

The second set of visible aspects of age separates members of the first set from members of the third. One would expect 壽 and 考, which appear in this third set, to fall into the first set, afterall, according to the *Standard* (1.14), 老 may be used in the sense of 壽, and in their respective *Shuowen* glosses 考 and 老 explain each other. Longevity

¹² Neither Duan Yucai (398) nor Xu Fu and Song Wenmin (p. 245) recognize this last aspect of Xu Shen's methodology: Duan Yucai sees the identification of the 人 component as superfluous (此篆蓋本从毛匕 ... 非中有人字也韻會無人字), Xu Fu and Song Wenmin link the seal graph to an oracle bone graph depicting, in the scholars' imagination, a man leaning on a stick.

being glossed as long-lasting (久 in its extended sense) highlights the fact that the term may refer beyond man (in contrast to the first set whose terms are limited to human age), to all long-lasting phenomena. 壽 is a highly auspicious term in the Chinese tradition, inscribed on red paper banners alongside 福 (blessing, prosperity). The adjacency of the subsequent term 考 to 孝 filial piety indicates Xu Shen understands the basic meaning of the term in the *Standard* sense of one's deceased father, for both these characters are linked by their concern with parent. 孝, just like 壽, is a culturally highly valued term.

While all the other terms in the old domain refer to old or manners of its appearance, filial piety, the term that closes the domain, describes children's attitude to parents. It is a general pattern in the *Shuowen* that characters only loosely connected to their domain graph are listed at the end of a domain. For example, the penultimate graph in the jade domain, 璫 *dàng*, is defined as: "金之美者與玉同色 Gold is a type of precious metal. It has the same color as jade." *Dàng* appears in the jade domain not because it is a jade or a jade-like stone, but because this metal's color resembles jade. Similarly, filial piety appears in the old domain not because it refers to [an aspect of] old, but because it is loosely connected to the notion of old age. To justify the character's appearance in the old domain, Xu Shen explains the combination of its graphic intentions as: "children support the old 子承老也."

The domain graph entry includes aspects of all three sets: generally speaking it refers to old, narrowly speaking it designates the eighth decade of human life; the graphic explanation "human hair turns white" specifies particular manifestation of old age; finally the gloss "venerable" links the graph to value terms at the end of the domain.

The appearance of three highly auspicious terms at the end of the domain is unusual, for Xu Shen's domains typically progress from auspicious to neutral to inauspicious.¹³ The old domain, on the other hand, progresses from neutral/positive reference (first set) to unwholesome appearance (second set) to high value (third set).

The fact that 壽 shares its glossing term 舊, a frequent substitute character for 久, with turtle, along the fact that 耆 is cognate with yarrow 蓍 further inscribe value into these two members of the domain. Turtle was used for prognostication because its longevity, so it was believed, enabled the animal to see into future; similarly, yarrow stalks were chosen for casting hexagrams because of the plant's durability. Duan Yucai quotes Liu Xiang and the *White Tiger Hall Disputations*:

Yarrow is pronounced like old, turtle is pronounced like long-lasting. When a turtle turns thousand, it becomes spirited; when a yarrow is hundred, it becomes numinous. Because of their durability, the two things can distinguish between well-fortuned and ill-fated. (678)

Had Xu Shen intended convergence to be modeled on the *Standard*, the example 耄老 (2.153) would offer itself as precisely the kind of "generally speaking the meaning (old) is same; narrowly speaking the specific reference (seventies vs. eighties) is different," so popular with Duan Yucai. The mutual glosses "老考也," "考老也," on the other hand, do not lend themselves to such treatment. The terms appear in different sets, i.e., they do not share a general referent, nor does one glean details of their reference by contrasting them. My understanding is that rather than to indicate shared reference, the purpose of the two glosses is to link value and reference. 'Old: greyed septuagenarian' is

¹³ For example, the domain of "issue signs" (乖) opens with 禮, 禧, 禎 and places 禍, 崇, 穢 near the end. The mind/heart domain (忪) opens with 息, 情, 性, 志, 意, is punctuated in the middle by the neutral term 怕 (non-acting, immediately preceded by positive and followed by negative terms), and ends with terms denoting pain, fear, sadness, and humiliation.

linked to 'venerable: deceased father' to highlight the fact that one approaches all people of old age with the same respect as one's parents; deceased father is linked to old to indicate that respect for one's parents is rooted in their experience. The terms are connected through their *how* rather than *what*; they *color* rather than *define* each other's basic meanings.

Regional commander, county chief

Xu Shen's example of convergence contrasts with his example of extension/substitution. 令, whose basic meaning of to command may be extended to refer to the person who commands, and 長, whose basic meaning of far away may be extended to refer to the person whose experience, or influence, stretches far, are subsumed under the same *Broadening Standard* heading of master 君.¹⁴ In the general sense of master the two terms are substitutable. In their specific sense, 令 refers to a head of a region with over ten thousand households; 長 refers to an administrator of an area smaller than ten thousand households.¹⁵ The link between the two terms is occasioned by shared reference; their contrast by specification of this reference. The emphasis is on *what* rather than *how*. Not only is Xu Shen's example of convergence not subject to the "shared reference," "generally speaking, narrowly speaking" treatments, these types of analysis fall under Xu Shen's sixth principle of extension/substitution.

¹⁴ Xu Shen's example of extension/substitution likely served as the basis for this Zhang Yi's listing.

¹⁵ "古者 ... 無所謂令長也秦變封建爲郡縣始有令長之名漢書白官公卿表云縣令長皆秦官掌治其縣萬戶以上爲令 ... 減萬戶爲長" Ye Dehui 葉德輝 六書古微 In Ding Fubao (1932) 3:179:2-179:3.

If one limits interpretation to the combination of definition and example, then Xu Shen's sixth principle concerns extension, i.e., the manner through which basic meaning is extended to cover new or peripheral senses of a term. If one takes the relation between regional commander and county chief as extending this core meaning of the sixth principle, then synonymy becomes another of its features. I may be pushing my interpretation a bit too far here, but, logically speaking, when a gloss is based on (partial) identity of reference, it could be considered a case of extension/substitution. In other words, when a relation between two terms is based on *how* the particular forms denote meaning, one is dealing with convergence. When two terms are related through *what* they denote, one is dealing with extension/substitution.

Glossing through sound: "通達物理 聞聲知情"

Zhang Taiyan's specification that "to establish a category" refers to sound category implies that the linking of value and reference is facilitated by language, i.e., that convergence is primarily a linguistic phenomenon. Moreover, it associates convergence with a widespread Han practice of glossing through sound. In commentaries on the classics, this type of exegesis is specified with the formulas A 之言 B or A 之爲言 B, loosely translated as "the cognitive meaning of A is B." Compared to other exegetical formulas,¹⁶ the sound gloss formula is unique in including 言 to speak, i.e., it alone is

¹⁶ To give seven basic ones (after Feng Shengli, lecture of 28 September 2006 at Harvard):

1. To distinguish specific: A 爲/曰/謂之 B. 害賢爲嫉害色爲妒 To grudge someone's ability is to be envious; to resent someone's appearance is to be jealous.
2. To refer to concrete for more abstract: A 謂 B. 恐美人之遲暮 I fear on account of His Beauty's old age. 美人謂楚王 'His Beauty' refers to the King of Chu.

speech specific. 之, the other term appearing in the formula, indicates genitive. A more literal translation would thus run as "the linguistic property of A is B."

The formula appears only once in the *Standard*, in the last gloss of the first three general chapters: "The linguistic property of ghost is to return. 鬼之爲言歸也" (3.113)

The scarcity of the formula does not mean there are no other sound glosses in the *Standard*: these are subsumed under the general formula AB 也. In regard to identifying sound glosses in the *Standard* and to their frequency, Bodman's claim that "only a fairly small number of [*Standard*'s] glosses are construable as sound glosses,"¹⁷ is countered by Carr, who argues that "when the definitions of [*Standard*'s thirteenth and fourteenth chapters] are analyzed in terms of their reconstructed Archaic Chinese pronunciations, there are a surprisingly large number of definitions of homorganic initials and finals." Carr quantifies his findings as 32 percent in the "Grasses Chapter" and 77 percent in the "Trees Chapter."¹⁸ Whether one sides with Bodman or Carr, the fact is that sound glosses are only an accidental aspect of the, from the point of view of exegesis, foundational first three chapters of the *Standard*.

Duan Yucai explains the exegetical formula as:

凡云之言者皆通其音義以爲詁訓非如讀爲之易其字讀如之定其音 (6)
凡云之言者皆就其雙聲(疊韻)以得其轉注假借之用 (449)

-
3. To specify appearance: A 貌, A-like.
 4. To equal: 猶. 側猶厓 An incline is equal to cliff.
 5. Gloss meaning through sound.
 6. To read as: A 讀如 B.
 7. Textual corruption: A 讀爲 B.

¹⁷ Bodman (1954) p. 7.

¹⁸ Carr (1979) p. 492. One should regard Carr's numbers as orientational, for identifying sound glosses in the absence of an explicit formula is problematic, as sound similarity is a matter of degree. Coblin (1983, pp. 15-16) also notes that: "determining the degree of phonetic similarity between glossed and glossing words in the paranomastic [sic] definitions is a fundamental and particularly vexing problem."

凡云之言者皆假其音以得其義 (562)

凡漢注云之言者皆謂其轉注假借之用 (680)

In general case, the formula "the property of ... is pronounced as" is a type of exegesis that connects sound and meaning. It is unlike the formula "is a textual corruption for" which changes the character in question, or "is read like" which settles its pronunciation.

In general case, the formula "the property of ... is pronounced as" relies on alliteration or rhyme to grasp convergence or substitution.

In general case, the formula "the property of ... is pronounced as" borrows sound to get the meaning.

In general case, when a Han commentary states "the property of ... is pronounced as" it refers to convergence or substitution.

Through the last gloss, which takes the formula to also refer to convergence, Duan Yucai acknowledges that converging glosses could be based on sound similarity, typically regarded the exclusive domain of substitution. For, unlike convergence, Xu Shen's definition of substitution includes the explicit conjunction "relying on sound." By taking the formula to refer both to convergence and substitution, Duan Yucai highlights the fact that commentators did not necessarily differentiate between the two. The formula could be used whenever sound similarity between two *words* (for sound similarity between *characters* the formula "read like [讀如 or 讀若]" would be employed) was used as the basis for a gloss.

As members of the final pair in the six principles of writing, convergence and substitution do not constitute exclusive categories (recall the rule of complementary pairs, introduced in chapter one, by which the second member of a pair extends the first): many glosses could potentially fall under either heading. Nevertheless, an attempt should be made on the basis of *Shuowen* data at differentiating between prototypical cases of sound based convergence and sound based loan. Provisionally, I propose that this difference consists in the relative degree of substitutability: convergence allows two distinct terms to color each other without acting as substitutes; substitution enables two terms to be used in place of one another. Convergence states: "A is like B," substitution states "Suppose A is

used in place of B." Moreover, convergence may act as the rationale for eventual substitution.¹⁹

Gathering paronomastic glosses from the *Shuowen*, however, is not a straightforward. For if the sound gloss formula appears once in the *Standard*, it is not featured at all in the *Shuowen*. Consequently, identifying sound glosses in Xu Shen's work is a matter of particular interpreter's choice. This choice is of course not arbitrary: it is guided by the interpreter's knowledge of ancient rhyme and initial categories. There are several works available that identify *Shuowen* sound glosses, Coblin (1983) and Deng Tingchen (1936) being two of them. Coblin lists 445 paronomastic [sic] glosses (4.5%), Deng Tingchen 751 (7.6%). Neither of the two scholars goes beyond listing the data. My approach to paronomasia aims to offset this one-sidedness of their work: I choose individual glosses, or groupings of glosses, and look for the motivation behind them.

Little has been written to explain Han sound glosses in the West. The rare exception is Miller's claim that in Han China:

No name of anything ... was thought to be of and in itself arbitrary, or in any way the result of an arbitrary agreement on the part of society employing it. Everything in the cosmos and on earth was the way it was, and every word, or name, was the word or name it was, for a reason. (Miller, 1975, p. 1217) ... The reasons behind words were a reflection of cosmic order, and searching them out was the great work of scholarship. (Miller, 1999, p. 461)

Unfortunately, Miller does not substantiate how the reason behind the names of things was made to be a reflection of cosmic order, or how this Han view related to earlier opinions on the subject. Consequently, his bold statement is somewhat misleading.

¹⁹ Echoing the standard line of scholarship on the subject, Bodman (1954, p. 6) writes: "A feature of the Chinese writing system is the loan use of characters in some other than their original or more usual sense. The comparatively large numbers of words which were similar in sound made it frequently convenient to use a certain character for a more unusual word identical or similar to it in sound... The habit of identifying different characters because of their loan application in early texts developed quite early. Such associations could easily evolve into sound glosses." Bodman understands sound glosses to have originated in phonetic loans. My point is the opposite: substitution develops out of convergence.

Two basic types of paronomastic glosses appear in the *Shuowen*. The first is made up of a single glossing word related in pronunciation to the glossed word. For example, "**hoarfrost** is related in pronunciation and meaning to **burry** 霜喪也." The second type is made up of a sentence that includes one or more words related in pronunciation to the glossed word. For example, "**snow** is the frozen rain that **delights** entities 雪凝[冰]雨說物者也." (卷十一 雨部) The distinction between the two types is formal rather than functional. For Xu Shen's sound gloss of the first type may be followed, as a means of clarification, by a sentence of the second type. Like in: "**Ale** is related in meaning and pronunciation to **prolong**. It is the means by which one **draws out** the good and bad in human nature. 酒就也所以就人性之善惡" (卷十四 酉部) Or, a gloss of the first type may be based on an exegetical comment of the second type. For example, Xu Shen's gloss "**God** is related in meaning and pronunciation to **truth** 帝諦也" (卷一 上部) is based on the Mao commentary entry "Meticulously **true** like **God**. 審諦如帝" (2)

In using both types of paronomasia in an entry, the *Shuowen* is paralleled by the *Explaining Names*, a late Eastern Han work that invariably combines glossing words and sentences. For example, "**Sun** is to say **full**. Its radiant brilliance is abundantly **full**. **Moon** is to say **wane**. It waxes and then it **wanes**. 日實也光明盛實也 月缺也滿則缺也" (釋名 釋天) The glossing word is embedded in a sentence to specify *how* a glossed and a glossing term relate.

The preface to this work also features a key line to Han philosophy of language: "夫名之於實各有義類 Generally speaking, in the way names relate to realities, there is in each case a proper category." Compare my translation to Bodman's (1954, p. 18):

"Now the name of a thing and the thing itself each have their proper category," and Miller's (1956, p. 281): "For, in correspondance of Name with Reality, there is in each instance that which is Right and Proper."

The precise interpretation of the line depends on how one takes the particle 之於. If 之 is taken as prosodic filler, then 於 (與) may be regarded as equivalent to "and," supporting Bodman's translation. If 之 is taken as grammatically functional, the conjunction 之於 indicates a relationship between two terms, supporting Miller's interpretation. While both constructions are grammatically permissible, broadly speaking Miller's reading is preferable, as Bodman's translation does not communicate anything philosophically substantial. But while Miller's take on 之於 is preferable, his translation of 義類 as "right and proper" is less convincing; Bodman's "proper category" being more accurate. Miller opts for this loose translation because once 義類 is taken to describe the relationship between name and reality, category is an awkward fit. But this, I would argue, is exactly the point. For, somewhat counter intuitively, category may act as the means through which names relate to things, the bridge between language and the world. Where Bodman interprets the sentence as indicating that in the world there is linguistic categorization (the name of a thing) and cognitive categorization (the thing itself), I take the sentence as arguing that, linguistic and cognitive categorization apart, category allows name and reference to come together. The way words of a language refer to things of the world is governed by categorization.

The term 義, which describes the relationship between a word and its reference, ensures that this particular kind of categorization is not arbitrary. The character is

typically used as a Han variant for the Zhou term 'proper 誼' (94). So the *History of the Han*, which uses older characters, states: "Benevolence, propriety, ritual decorum, knowledge, and good faith constitute the way of the five constants 夫仁誼禮知信五常之道."²⁰ Xu Shen glosses 誼 in this sense paronomastically as: "**Proper** is that to which a person **fits**. 人之所宜" (卷三 言部) In its extended sense, 誼 (義) stands for linguistic meaning. Rather than being equated with referent, linguistic meaning denotes *how* a word (character) and its referent are related. For Liu Xi the aptness of a category is invariably assessed through the sound of a word. Sound and meaning categories (聲類義類) overlap.

In regard to the *Shuowen*, Duan Yucai observes:

聲與義同原故諧聲之偏旁多與字義相近此會意形聲兩兼之字致多也說文或偁其會意略其形聲或偁其形聲略其會意雖則省文實欲互見不知此則聲與義隔又或如宋人字說祇有會意別無形聲 (2)

Sound and meaning spring from the same source. Therefore the sound radical is often close to the overall character meaning. This is why there are so many characters that span both the principle of combining intentions and the principle of shaping sound. The *Shuowen* either acknowledges the combining intentions principle and omits the shaping sound principle, or acknowledges shaping sound and omits combining intentions. Even if [Xu Shen] in this way omits text, in reality [he] wants both to be recognized. If one does not realize this, then shape and sound part. It is then like the Song scholars' explanations of characters that only recognize the combining intentions principle but miss out on the principle of shaping sound.

Duan Yucai's deceptively simple opening sentence highlights the basic rule by which Qing textual scholars differentiated their work from their Song predecessors: sound is tantamount to meaning. Qing scholarship perceived itself as consisting of a linguistic turn, or to be more precise, return, as its practitioners believed they were rediscovering the Han penchant for relating through sound rather than putting forth a new methodology. Duan Yucai's above gloss is affixed to the following entry:

禱 以眞受福也从示眞聲 (卷一 示部)

²⁰ "The biography of Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒列傳 (48)."

Zhēn is to receive heavenly assistance with **genuineness**. The character falls in the cognitive domain of heaven issuing signs/sacrifice and is cognate with/pronounced like 眞.

Duan Yucai's gloss is prompted by the fact that the phonetic, just like in the gloss "誼人之所宜" quoted above,²¹ is used as part of a paronomastic explanatory sentence, i.e., it is deliberately related to the meaning of the whole character. But unlike in the case of 誼, where explanation is followed by the dual analysis "falls in the cognitive domain of fitting, fitting also indicates sound 从宜宜亦聲," the above analysis is limited to recognizing the pronunciation aspect of 眞. The *Shuowen* is highly inconsistent in regard to using the formula 从 A, A 亦聲, making its (non-)appearance suspect to textual corruption. Thus Duan Yucai's proposition that, when possible, both principles should be seen as operating is reasonable.

An explanation that incorporates the character's phonetic is part of a larger class of glosses that include characters with the same *Bedeutungsträger*. For example, "the **Dì** sacrifice is the **true** sacrifice 禘諦祭也." "To sacrifice in spring is termed **cí**. Since sacrificial items are few, many **words** are used instead. 春祭曰祠品物少多文詞也." (卷一 示部) The atypical domain of 句 also belongs to this class, as members of the same "phonetic radical (諧聲) series" often share a general meaning. To use a few of Duan Yucai's examples:

凡从兀聲之字多取孤高之意 (1) 凡于聲字多訓大 (24) 凡金聲今聲之字皆有禁制之義 (390)

Characters that use 兀 to indicate pronunciation are often intended in the sense of 'singular and tall.' ... Characters that use 于 to indicate pronunciation are often glossed as 'large.' ...

Characters that use 金 or 今 to indicate pronunciation often carry the meaning of restraint.

²¹ Or in: "To sacrifice in kind is to sacrifice to Heaven and spirits by means of things of the right sort. 禘 lèi 以事類祭天神," "To convey to spirits is to report through sacrifice. 禋 kǎo 告祭也" (卷一 示部)

However, not all characters that use 句 to indicate pronunciation appear in the 句 domain. Some are related only in pronunciation, not in meaning, and are listed in different domains. Moreover, the fact that Xu Shen employs glosses based on the same phonetic indicator signals that the semantic connection is not a matter-of-course, otherwise such glosses would be redundant. Since Xu Shen lists characters according to cognitive domain indicator rather than linguistic meaning carrier, the perception of meaning similarity between two or more characters that share the same pronunciation is left unresolved. Unlike cognitive domain membership, which incorporates all characters that share the same cognitive domain indicator, connection through sound is a time dependent variable: a particular connection may be perceived in one situation, while it may be blocked in another. When a sound connection is posited explicitly as part of Xu Shen's gloss, it inevitably connects only *two* characters, rather than a class of characters. In fact, Xu Shen's choice of a particular character may be interpreted as the exclusion of other candidates. For example, 振 is related to 震 and 震 is related to 辰, but 祗 is related to 蜃. Thus 振震辰 on the one hand and 祗蜃 on the other constitute two distinct semantic groups within the same phonetic radical series.

Compared to the overall number of Xu Shen's paronomastic glosses, glosses that tie characters with the same phonetic radical are relatively rare. This fact may be interpreted as an indication that the same information is already denoted by the X 聲 formula. Yet, occasionally, Xu Shen finds it necessary to elaborate an implicit connection explicitly.

If paronomastic glosses rarely tie characters with the same *Bedeutungsträger*, Xu Shen's read-like 讀若 glosses do this more frequently. Now, by Coblin's (1983) count, 794 read-like glosses appear irregularly at the end of individual *Shuowen* entries (about

eight percent). The irregular manner of their appearance makes them, just like the 从 A, A 亦聲 formula, suspect to textual corruption. Even more so given that in some domains read-like glosses appear more frequently than in others: compare the 玉 (18 in 126 entries) to 示 (2 in 60 entries) domains. Thus some domains were transmitted with frequent, other domains with sporadic read-like glosses. Once again, read-like glosses with the same phonetic may be understood both as "A is pronounced like B" and "A is not pronounced as [implicit] C." For example: "珣 ... 讀若荀" is explained by Ye Dehui as: "因句有章句之句一音故明此音荀 Because 句 can also be pronounced as the 句 in 章句, the gloss specifies that here it is pronounced like 荀."²² That is to say, 珣讀若荀 also conveys the information that 珣 is not read like 句 in 章句. Where in this particular case only pronunciation is an issue, in other read-like glosses differentiation entails meaning divergence. Think of "the vertical line denotes the connecting of upper and lower. Drawing up it reads like 'to advance,' drawing down it reads like to 'retreat.' | 上下通也引而上行讀若凶引而下行讀若退" (卷一 | 條)

Xu Shen's 讀若 glosses are tricky as the formula A 讀若 B may at times indicate similarity of pronunciation, similarity of pronunciation and meaning, or a particular writing convention where character B is used in place of character A. Ye Dehui's (1923) study of *Shuowen* read-like glosses rarely goes beyond phonology. Ye Dehui shows how the sound of two characters is related but does not examine the grounds for their meaning connection. That Xu Shen's read-like glosses need to be considered as part of his paronomastic practice is attested by, among other things, entries where a read-like gloss

²² Ye Dehui (1923) 1:5.

repeats information included in a paronomastic explanation. For example: "祢明視以筭之 ... 讀若筭. *Suàn* is to interpret an omen by means of **counting**. It reads like **to count**."

The difference between Xu Shen's read-like and paronomastic explanations does not lie so much in substance as in emphasis. Generally speaking, read-like glosses indicate substitutability, paronomastic glosses point to a likeness.

To summarize, in the *Shuowen* connection through sound is indicated in three basic ways: by the paronomastic gloss (8 percent), by the A 聲 analysis (86 percent), or by the read-like formula (8 percent).²³ Adding up these numbers shows that there are more cases of connecting through sound than there are entries, supporting the claim that "Xu Shen is very rarely *not* glossing through sound."²⁴ I limit my analysis below to the first type, because the second type indicates potential rather than explicit connection, while the third type may convey other types of information than sound-and-meaning similarity.

Sound gloss as rationalization

The purpose of paronomastic glosses in *Explaining Names* is also stated in its preface:

百姓日稱而不知其所以之意

Common folk daily weigh realities with names but do not understand the reason why.

Liu Xi's glosses provide the explicit explanation for *why* particular names are used in specific circumstances. The same aspect of rationalizing an existing convention is also detectable in the *Shuowen*, where nineteen glosses include the formula "therefore it is

²³ One may add here the fourth method of characters with alternative *Bedeutungsträger*s, e.g., "魴 ... 或从魴" (卷十一 魚部) or "蠺 ... 或从蠺" (卷十三 虫部)

²⁴ Feng Shengli quoting Gu Jiegang, lecture at Harvard, fall 2006.

referred to 故謂之," and two glosses include the equivalent formula "therefore it is called

故曰." In regard to the term "to refer," Xu Shen and Duan Yucai echo the concern of

Explaining Names:

謂報也（卷三 言部）注曰謂者論人論事得其實（89）To refer is to requite. Duan Yucai:
To refer is to discuss man or things and get to their actuality.

To cite a few examples of such "getting to the actuality" rationalization in the *Shuowen*:

祊 shèn 社肉盛以蜃故謂之祊

箏 shēng 十三簧象鳳之身也箏正月之音物生故謂之箏

鼓 gǔ 郭也春分之音萬物郭皮甲而出故謂之鼓

倉 cāng 穀藏也倉黃取而藏之故謂之倉

黍 shǔ 禾屬而黏者也以大暑而種故謂之黍

韭 jiǔ 菜名一種而久者故謂之韭

廋 kuí 九達道也似龜背故謂之廋

Shèn is the meat used in sacrificing to the earth spirit. Since it is finest when coming from a **large clam**, it is referred to as **shèn**.

Shēng is a musical instrument made of thirteen reeds. It resembles the body of the **Peng** bird. It is the sound of the first lunar month. Since entities **come to life** then, it is referred to as **shēng**.

Gǔ (drum) is related in pronunciation and meaning to **pop a shell**. It is the sound of mid-spring when entities **pop** their casings and spurt out, therefore it is referred to as **gǔ**.

Cāng (granary) is the **storehouse** for grain. When grain turns yellow, it is harvested and **stored**, therefore the place is referred to as **cāng**.

Shǔ (broomcorn millet) is a type of sticky grain. It is planted during great **heat**, therefore it is referred to as **shǔ**.

Jiǔ (chives) is a name of a vegetable. Once planted, it **lasts long**, therefore it is referred to as **jiǔ**.

Kuí (intersection) is the road that reaches nine directions. Since it resembles the back of a **turtle**, it is referred to as **kuí**.

Rationalization through sound may be based on prototype (祊 shèn), temporal

connection (箏 shēng, 鼓 gǔ, 黍 shǔ), similarity of appearance (箏 shēng, 廋 kuí), or

characteristic attribute (倉 cāng, 韭 jiǔ). The entry on 箏 shēng combines two distinct

approaches: similarity of appearance allows the shēng musical instrument to be

connected to the bird Peng, while the coming to life of entities in early spring accounts

for the instrument's association with the first lunar month. Apparently, similarity of

pronunciation may occasion more than one rationalization. Such multivalence is also detectable in 龜 *guī*, the glossing word of 馗 *kuí*. While in the quoted case similarity of appearance is posited between a road intersection and the troughs on a turtle plastron, turtle itself is glossed through attribute as **old** 舊 *jù*. Peng and to grow, intersection and old do not exclude each other.

Multiple sound glosses

Multivalence in regard to possible sound connections is most obvious in Heaven 天, the first paronomastically glossed term in both the *Shuowen* and *Explaining Names*:

𡗗 *tiān* 顛也至高無上从一𡗗

Heaven is connected in meaning and sound to **[head] vertex**. It refers to the topmost without superior. It combines the intentions of 一 and 大.

Few characters later, in the 示 domain, Heaven appears in the following sound gloss:

禪 *shén* 天神引出萬物者也从示申

As for spirit, the **spirit of heaven draws** out myriad entities. The character combines the intentions of to issue signs and to extend. (Or, falls in the cognitive domain of issuing signs and is potentially cognate with characters pronounced like 申.²⁵)

The gloss is contrasted with the immediately following entry:

祇 *qí* 地祇提出萬物者也从示氏聲

As for deity, the **earth deity kicks** out the myriad entities. The character falls in the domain of issuing signs and is potentially cognate with characters pronounced like 氏.²⁶

²⁵ "Hsü Hsüan ... in a number of cases where entries were originally of the form A ... *ts'ung* X, Y *sheng* ... excised the character *sheng* 聲 from the entry, leaving the anomalous formula ... *ts'ung* X Y." (Miller, 1993, p. 436)

²⁶ Same intention in regard to earth shows in: "土 *tǔ* 地之吐生物者也 As for **soil**, it is the earth's **spitting out** of myriad entities." (卷十三 土部)

Heaven pulls, earth pushes. Heaven appears in yet another sound gloss in the transformation 𠂔 domain, which follows the human domain in the middle of the *Shuowen*:

眞 zhēn 僊人變形而登天也

Genuine is when the magic person changes form and ascends to **heaven**.

In *Explaining Names* heaven is glossed as:

天豫司竟冀以舌腹言之天顯也在上高顯也青徐以舌頭言之天坦(垣)也坦(垣)然高而遠也 ... 易謂之乾乾健也健行不息也又謂之玄玄懸也如懸物在上也 (釋名 釋天)

When the initial is uttered in the northern Yu, Si, Yan, and Yi dialects with the belly of the tongue, **heaven** is pronounced like **manifest**, for it is manifested up on high. When the initial is uttered in the southern Qing and Xu dialects with the tip of the tongue, **heaven** is pronounced like **level**, for it is leveled (towering) high and far. The *Change* refers to Heaven as **qian**; **qian** is glossed as **vigorous**, as it moves **vigorously** without stop. Heaven is also explained as **hanging**. **To hang** is related to **suspend**. As if **to suspend** things up there.

The *Shuowen* connects heaven through sound with the four words: vertex, spirit, to draw out, and genuine; *Explaining Names* with the two words: manifested and level (towering); the *Changes* with qian, vigorous, and to hang. Even these eight separate associations are not exhaustive, as Gui Fu 桂馥 points out:

諸言天者多取聲近爲訓元命包天之言王眞禮統天之爲言鎮也神也珍也 (Gui Fu, 1998, pp. 2-3)

In explaining heaven, glosses often grasp on proximity of sound. In the "Yuanming bao," **Heaven** is glossed through sound as **jade ear plug for a corpse (genuine)**. In the *Rites*, heaven is glossed through sound as to **press down; spirited; precious**.

The special status of heaven as the term that attracts various types of sound glosses is linked to its quality of roundness, posited in the following entry:

圓 yuán 天體也从口巽聲 注曰呂氏春秋曰何以說天道之圓也精氣一上一下圓周復襍無所 留故曰天道圓何以說地道之方也萬物殊類殊形皆有分職不能相爲故曰地道方按 ... 許言天體亦謂其體一氣循環無終無始非謂其形渾圓也

Round refers to the physical aspect of heaven. The graph falls in the cognitive domain of to encircle and is potentially cognate with words pronounced like to roll. Duan Yucai: The *Lushi Chunqiu* states: "Why is it said that the way of heaven is round? The quintessential vapor rises and then descends, revolving and gathering back, there is no place where it is detained. That is why it is said that the way of heaven is round. Why is it said that the way of earth is square? The myriad entities fall in different categories and have distinct shapes, all are differentiated and cannot be mistaken for one another. That is why the way of earth is said to be square. Duan Yucai settles the matter: By stating "body of heaven," Xu Shen

refers to its body consisting of one vapor circulating around, without beginning and end. He does not refer to its shape being whole and round.

According to the account preserved in the *Lushi Chunqiu*, there are two basic ways of operation: the way of heaven treats things as expressions of one circulating vapor; the way of earth deals with entities as distinct and disconnected. To gloss through sound, i.e., to rely on convergence,²⁷ is to connect without end, following the way of heaven; to differentiate through cognition is to locate discrete referents, following the way of earth. Unlike the *Explanation of Names*, which limits itself to sound-based glosses, the *Shuowen* combines both operations.

In earlier literature, terms with alternative sound glosses appearing in both same and different texts are not uncommon. Qing scholars Zhang Jinwu 張金吾 and Wang Xianqian 王先謙 have collected these in the *Guang Shiming* 廣釋名 and the *Shiming Shuzheng Bu* 釋名疏證補. Zhang Yiren 張以仁 (1976) provides two short, illustrative lists of the two types and notes the challenge these have posed to modern scholars like Wang Li 王力, who wish to interpret the sound gloss phenomenon through the prism of modern etymology. Nicholas Bodman proposes the following practical approach in regard to alternative sound glosses: "I have ... mentioned very few of such parallels in this study because of my conviction that the sound glosses of each individual author must be studied by themselves as unitary systems."²⁸ In Bodman's view, Han sound glosses

²⁷ Roundness is connected through sound glosses to members of the cognate family of turning: "**Circular** is to say **round** 團圓也 (卷六 口部). **Tuán** is a **round** bamboo utensil 筩圓竹器也. (卷五 竹部) To **spin** with one's hand is to say [turn] **around** 搏圓也." (卷十二 手部) The first character in the designation "convergence," also member of this cognate family, is glossed in Xu Xuan's edition: "To revolve is to be connected 轉連也" and in Xu Kai's edition "to **revolve** is to say **return** 轉還也." (卷十四 車部) Through alliteration the term glosses "**spread out** 展轉也." (卷八 尸部) The frequency of these sound glosses confirms roundness is tied to connecting through sound: convergence is rooted in the way of heaven.

²⁸ Bodman, (1954) pp. 18-19, n. 9.

reflect the linguistic intuition of a particular speaker. One may add that since many *Shuowen* sound glosses appear in earlier works, particularly in the *Comprehensive Discussions in the White Tiger Hall* or the *Huainanzi*, much of this intuition is passed down or popular knowledge. Xu Shen's and Liu Xi's glosses entail choice rather than indiscriminate recording or creative formulation. And supporting Bodman's "unitary system" idea, most entries in the *Shuowen*²⁹ and *Explaining Names*³⁰ include only one sound gloss.

In being tied to a particular text or person, sound glosses differ from etymology³¹ as a tool of historical or comparative philology. As Bernhard Karlgren notes in the introduction to his study of word families in ancient Chinese, a present day scientist can only stipulate which characters could conceivably be considered cognates.³² The confirmation has to be sought, in one way or another, in the texts of the period themselves. But unlike Lu Zongda or Karlgren, I would argue, along with Bodman, that

²⁹ There are perhaps as few as two explicit multiple sound glosses in the *Shuowen*: "𠂔 *niú* 事也理也 Buffalo is related in meaning and pronunciation to serve as well as to structure." (卷二 牛部) "𠂔 *mā* 怒也武也 Horse is related in meaning and pronunciation to fury as well as to martial prowess." (卷十 馬部) In the first case two distinct attributes (to serve; to differentiate) are located in buffalo through sound. In the second case it is conceivable that angry and weapon fall into the same conceptual range, i.e., the two glosses reinforce each other. The absence of more multiple sound glosses in the *Shuowen* is occasioned by its general method whereby only one basic meaning is given for each character. This feature, on the other hand, does not stop rhyming definitions with more than one rhyming word, such as: "天神引出萬物者也," "地祇提出萬物者也," "卜灼剝龜也."

³⁰ There are 30 entries with two or more sound glosses, or about two percent, in the *Explaining Names*.

³¹ I refrain from using the word etymology to render sound gloss for two more reasons. First, while 'etymology' has come to be associated with the history of a word, in the Han context there is little evidence that sound glosses entailed diachronic aspect. Second, etymology literally means "the study of true (*etymos*) meanings." By using the word etymology in its basic sense, one either introduces an incompatible theory of truth into the Han context or is required to formulate a more appropriate one. Although this essay touches upon alternative theories of true conditions, I am not ready to state these explicitly.

³² "The purport of the tables [of characters with similar pronunciation] should not be misunderstood. I am very far from affirming that all the words in each group *are* cognate; I only mean to say that they *may be suspected* of being cognate. ... So each small 'family group' has to be considered merely as a kind of *frame*, containing materials from which a choice will have to be made in future." (Karlgren, 1934, p. 59)

connection through sound is not an impersonal aspect of the language waiting to be retraced by a resourceful scientist, but the product of a linguistic intuition of a Han speaker.³³ I say "Han" because the practice of glossing through sound comes to an abrupt end in the period immediately following the fall of Eastern Han. Connecting through sound is a time and place specific practice.

Ye Dehui identifies the advent of a practice that would replace the word for word sound glosses in Liu Xi's two entries that differentiate meaning through pronunciation:³⁴

劉熙撰釋名又以開口合口舌頭舌腹等類定音之異同至孫炎而成翻切然音切生而聲與義離而爲二（說文讀若字考序 Ye Dehui, 1923, p. 1)

In selecting his *Explanations of Names*, Liu Xi introduced a distinction between the categories of opened and closed mouth as well as tip and bottom of tongue in order to fix sameness and difference of sound. Then it came to Sun Yan who completed the initial plus final spelling system. Once this initial plus final spelling system was born, sound and meaning parted their ways to become two things.

Ye Dehui sees Liu Xi as taking a step toward the sound only spelling system of the later tradition. While Liu Xi's may indeed be a phonetics based distinction, still, it is used to differentiate meaning. Unlike Ye Dehui, I do not see the clear separation of sound and meaning yet present in Liu Xi's work. The contrast with the later *fanqie* system, nevertheless, helps to contextualize the Han practice: to talk of pronunciation was to talk of meaning. Observing on this time specificity, Bodman notes:

The fashion for sound glosses seems to have died out shortly after Liu's period. This must be connected with the emergence of a newer and better way of indicating sound similarity, the system of *fan-ch'ieh*, which uses two characters to spell a word, one character for the initial and a second character for the rime. The invention of *fan-ch'ieh* appeared toward the close of the Han period. (Bodman, 1954, p. 8)

³³ True to his roots in Indo-european philology, Karlgren claims that: "definite results can only be gained by comparative Sinitic researches, for the phonetic similarity can sometimes be very deceptive ... many similarities must reasonably be due to chance." (Ibid. p. 59)

³⁴ Apart from the already discussed gloss on heaven, the other such gloss is: "風兗豫司冀橫口合唇言之風汜也其氣博汜而動物也青徐言風蹶口開唇推氣言之風放也氣放散也 In the northern Yan, Yu, Si, and Yi dialects, **wind** is to say **permeating**. The air **pervades** everywhere and stirs entities. In the southern Qing and Xu dialects, **wind** is to say **pursue**. Air **pursues** and scatters." (釋名 釋天)

While a link between the appearance of the rhyme and initial spelling system and the demise of the practice of word for word sound glossing is certainly to be recognized, Bodman's comment is both superficial and unduly judgemental. The emergence of a new practice, the roots of which lie in the earlier period (most sound glosses relied either on alliteration or on rhyme, i.e., words were perceived as consisting of initial and final), manifests a larger change in regard to the perception and use of language. The increased precision in denoting pronunciation is offset by the loss of meaning connection. The divorcing of sound and meaning constitutes a major seismic shift in Chinese intellectual history.

Following Bodman's approach of treating sound glosses of individual authors as unitary systems, one may begin investigating Xu Shen's use of paronomasia by pitting his method against Liu Xi's. To begin with, *Explaining Names* "is the only book containing sound glosses and little else."³⁵ Only words whose sound connection the author wished to state explicitly are included. The sound gloss is the principal target of the work. In the *Shuowen*, on the other hand, explicit sound glosses appear randomly and are coupled with other types of analysis. Sound gloss is one of exegetical techniques, and needs to be assessed through its relation to these other methods.

Ten heavenly stems, twelve earthly branches

Two practical sets of terms for comparing the *Shiming* and the *Shuowen* are the ten heavenly stems and the twelve earthly branches, which constitute the basis for the

³⁵ Bodman (1954) p. 6.

sixty day calendrical cycle. In the *Explaining Names* these appear in the opening chapter -- following the four seasons, designations for year, and the five phases -- in the order twelve branches and then ten stems. Each of Liu Xi's twenty two entries includes a sound gloss. In the *Shuowen*, these appear at the very end of the final chapter -- following the cardinal numbers that had not been accounted for in earlier chapters (four, five, six, seven, nine) -- in the order ten stems and then twelve branches. Where elsewhere in the *Shuowen*, sequence of domains is typically underlied by graphic similarity, here succession in the respective three counting systems determines the order of domains. All twelve branches include a sound gloss. Ten stems, on the other hand, are evenly divided -- five to five, or, six to four, depending on how strict one's sound criteria are -- between entries that include a sound gloss and those that do not.

Could this distinction between twelve branches (always gloss through sound) and ten stems (gloss through sound half of the time) be deliberate? One way of accounting for this disparity is to take the respective referents into consideration. Twelve branches refer to the twelve months, i.e., aspects of time only. The five pairs of stems, on the other hand, refer to the four seasons (the two central stems do not correspond to a season) as well as the five spatial directions (including center). The even split in ten stems could reflect the dual aspect of time and space: in the temporal sense paronomastic gloss is used; in the spatial sense it is not used. The absence of sound connection in spatial thinking is corroborated by the country/land domain (𡗗) that includes 184 entries, yet not one of them relies on paronomasia.³⁶ Granted this is the case, sound glossing could be tied to

³⁶ Following Deng Tingchen's sound criteria (1936, p. 38). Within the land domain, place entries string a geographical loop, beginning in northwest, moving into center (the Pass), turning down southwest, then moving east to about the longitude of center before looping up northeast, swerving down to southeast, and shooting back to the center.

temporal aspect, while its absence to spatial considerations. Since the *Shuowen* is not obliged to provide a sound gloss in each case, it can combine the two aspects within a semantic set like the ten stems.

Let us examine Xu Shen's treatment of the two sets of domain graphs in detail:

- 𠂇 *jiǎ* 東方之孟陽氣萌動从木戴孚甲之象一曰人頭宜爲甲甲象人頭
 乚 *yǐ* 象春艸木冤曲而出陰氣尙彊其出乙乙也與乚同意乙承甲象人頸 ...
 冫 *bǐng* 位南方萬物成炳然陰氣初起陽氣將虧从一入門一者陽也 ... 象人肩
 亠 *dīng* 夏時萬物皆丁實象形 ... 丁承丙象人心
 𠂇 *wù* 中宮也象六甲五龍相拘絞也戊承丁象人脅 ...
 𠂇 *jǐ* 中宮也象萬物辟藏詘形也己承戊象人腹 ...
 𠂇 *gēng* 位西方象秋時萬物庚庚有實也庚承己象人 ...
 𠂇 *xīn* 秋時萬物成而孰金剛味辛辛痛即泣出从一从辛辛鼻也承庚象人股 ...
 壬 *rén* 位北方也陰極陽生...象人褰妊之形承亥壬以子生之敘也...壬承辛象人脰脰任體也
 𠂇 *guǐ* 冬時水土平可揆度也象水從四方流入地中之形癸承壬象人足
Jiǎ: The vigorous *yang* vapor of the eastern direction sprouts and moves. The graph depicts a tree bearing a shell or case. Another explanation states that human head is suitable for a casket, thus in regard to human body, it symbolizes/corresponds to head.
Yǐ: Depicts spring grass or tree twisting and emerging. The yin vapor is still strong, so its emergence is *obstructed-like*. ... Neck.
Bǐng: Occupies the southern direction. The myriad entities mature **splendidly**. The yin vapor is about to arise, the yang vapor is about to start diminishing. The graph depicts 一 entering into 冫. 一 denotes *yang*. ... Arms
Dīng: In the summer, the myriad entities are *strong* and plump. The graph mimics the shape. ... Heart
Wù: Denotes the middle palace. The graph depicts the one of six shells and the five dragons (i.e., phases)³⁷ locked and entangled in combat. ... Ribs.
Jǐ: Denotes the middle palace. The graph depicts myriad entities coiling into hiding. ... Belly.
Gēng: Occupies the western direction. Mimics myriad entities **transforming**³⁸ into crop. ... Waist.
Xīn: In autumn the myriad entities mature and become ripe. The taste of metal is **hot and pungent**, painful to the point that tears come out. ... Thigh.
Rén: Occupies the northern direction. Yin reaches its extreme, yang is first born. ... The graph depicts the shape of being pregnant. It ensues from the *hài* earthly branch, using the sequence of child coming to life. ... Shins. Shins **bear** the body.
Guǐ: In winter water and land are level, one may **survey** and measure. The graph depicts the shape of water pouring from four directions into the earth. ... Feet.³⁹

³⁷ 漢書 (741)

³⁸ 月令注庚之言更 (741)

³⁹ Its being cognate with a ruler/carpenter square (規) is suggested by the read-like gloss: "嬰媿也 ... 讀若癸." (卷十二 女部 嬰條)

𠄎 *zǐ* 十一月陽氣動萬物滋人以爲僂象形
 𠄎 *chǒu* 紐也十二月萬物動用事象手之形時加丑亦舉手時也
 𠄎 *yín* 臚也正月陽氣動去黃泉欲上出陰尙彊象宀不達臚寅於下也
 𠄎 *mǎo* 冒也二月萬物冒地而出象開門之形故二月爲天門
 辰 *chén* 震也三月陽氣動蠱電振民農時也物皆生从乙匕象芒達厂聲也辰房星天時也
 巳 *sì* 巳也四月陽氣已出陰氣已藏萬物見成文章故巳爲蛇象形
 午 *wǔ* 𠄎也五月陰氣午逆陽冒地而出此予矢同意
 未 *wèi* 味也六月滋味也五行木老於未象木重枝葉也
 申 *shēn* 神也七月陰氣成體自申束从臼自持也吏臣鋪時聽事申旦政也
 酉 *yǒu* 就也八月黍成可爲酎酒象古文酉之形 𠄎 古文酉从卯卯爲春門萬物已出酉爲秋門萬物已入一閉門象也
 戌 *xū* 滅也九月陽氣微萬物畢成陽下入地也五行土生於戌盛於戌从戊含一
 亥 *hài* 𠄎也十月微陽起接盛陰从二二古文上字一人男一人女也从乙象褻子咳𠄎之形春秋傳曰亥有二首六身 𠄎 古文亥爲豕與豕同亥而生子復從一起

Zǐ: In the eleventh month (of the lunar calendar) the yang vapor moves, the myriad entities **burgeon**. People use the character for designation. Mimics the shape.

Chǒu: Tied up but about to be loosened.⁴⁰ In the twelfth month the myriad entities move and take advantage of things. Mimics the shape of a hand. The time (sun) enhances *chǒu*, this is also the time of raising one's hand, i.e., of human action.

Yín is related in meaning and pronunciation to **knee cap**. In the first month the yang vapor stirs, leaves the [underground] yellow springs, and aspires to emerge. However, yin is still strong. The graph mimics covering and not reaching, being **capped** and **trapped** as if under a roof.

Mǎo is related in meaning and pronunciation to **cover**. In the second month the myriad entities **cover** the ground and germinate. The graph mimics the shape of a door opening, therefore the second month is taken for the gate of heaven.

Chén is related in meaning and pronunciation to **shudder**. In the third month the yang vapor stirs, thunder and lightning **tremble**. This is the time people engage in agriculture. The graph combines the intentions of twisting/not reaching and to change. The change graph symbolizes now reaching. It is pronounced like 厂. *Chén* also refers to the Fáng constellation, it is the time of heaven. That is why the graph follows the ancient graph for up.

Sì is to **complete**. In the fourth month yang vapor emerges **completely**, while the yin vapor is **completely** submerged. The myriad entities are all manifested, their patterns fully realized, that is why the graph uses the depiction of a snake to convey its idea. (Via graphic extension: the yang vapor is completely rolled out, the yin vapor is completely coiled up. 746)

Wǔ is to say **resist**. In the fifth month the yin vapor **resists** and combats yang. It covers the ground and emerges. In its graphic aspect it shares intention with arrow.

Wèi is to say **flavor**. The sixth month augments **flavors**. In regard to the five phases, the tree phase matures during *wèi*, thus the graph depicts a tree heavy with branches and leaves.

Shēn is to say **numinous/stretch**.⁴¹ In the seventh month the yin vapor fully materializes, it **extends** and curls. The graph follows 臼 to indicate that [the yin vapor] props up itself.

Yǒu is to say **lasting**. In the eighth month broomcorn millet ripens and can be made into young **ale**. The seal graph mimics the ancient graph. The ancient graph follows *mǎo*. *Mǎo* denotes the gate of spring when the myriad entities completely emerge; *yǒu* denotes the gate

⁴⁰ 紐 ... 一曰結而可解 (卷十三 糸部) 十二月陰氣之固結已漸解故曰紐 淮南天文訓 (744)

⁴¹ Following Duan Yucai's proposed emendation. (746)

of autumn when the myriad entities completely enter. The horizontal line in the graph symbolizes a closed door.

Xū is to say **extinguished**. In the ninth month the yang vapor becomes indistinct, myriad entities complete their diminution. Yang descends and enters the earth. In regard to the five phases, the earth phase is born in *wù* and flourishes during *xū*.⁴² The graph thus follows *wù* (the middle palace, i.e., earth) and the horizontal stroke (denotes yang, earth encloses yang, 752).

Hài is related in meaning and pronunciation to **herbal root** (yang hides down below, 752). In the tenth month the indistinct yang arises and comes into contact with the thriving yin. The graph follows the ancient graph for up (because yin is up and above 752). Of the two depicted figures, one is woman and one is man (fulfilling the way of qian and the way of kun). 乙 depicts the shape of a giggling child. According to the *Zuo Commentary*, the graph consists of two strokes above denoting two heads, and six strokes below denoting six bodies. Ancient script uses 豕 for this graph: this is the same graph as for pig. To be situated at *hài* and to conceive a child, then it all again **arises** from **one**.⁴³

The stems and the branches are quintessentially "empty" abstract terms. By empty I mean they are unlikely to trigger specific associations for the average reader apart from their role in the counting system. The respective entries fill a void. Xu Shen's sound glosses link these abstract terms to concrete manifestations, such as knee cap, taste, or herbal root, or general ideas, such as to shudder, resist, or last. In some cases (𠂔 壬 𠂔) sound gloss is reinforced by graphic explanation. In other cases (𠂔 𠂔 𠂔) graphic explanation provides additional information to the sound gloss. In the cases where sound gloss is missing, the explanation of the overall meaning derives from a particular graphic interpretation: 𠂔 is explained as the casing on a sprout, 𠂔 depicts obstructed growth, 𠂔 mimics the coiling of entities. In these three cases, graphic explanation takes the place of a sound gloss, suggesting that one of the reasons why Xu Shen, unlike Liu Xi, does not have to always provide a sound gloss is because the correspondance between name and reality is secured by the graphic form. Many of the above graphic explanations mix abstract and concrete levels of analysis, leading Duan Yucai to choose examples for his

⁴² 淮南子 天文訓

⁴³ Paronomasia between one and rise suggested by Duan Yucai. (752)

general observation on the intermingling of the two levels of conceptualization from these two sets:

指事亦得稱象形故乙丁戊己皆指事也而丁戊己皆解曰象形子丑寅卯皆指事也而皆解曰象形有事則有形故指事皆得曰象形而其實不能溷 ... 指事之別於象形者形謂一物事咳眾物專博斯分故一舉日月一舉上下上下所咳者物多日月祇一物學者知此可以得指事象形之分矣 (755)

Pointing an event can also be designated as mimicking shape. The Heavenly Stems *yi, ding, wu, ji* all point an event, yet *ding, wu, ji* are explained as mimicking shape. The Earthly Branches *zi, chou, yin, mao* all point an event, yet all are explained as mimicking shape. ... Once there is an event, then there is a shape, thus all cases of pointing an event may be designated as mimicking shape. The respective actualities, however, may not be confused. ... The difference between pointing an event and mimicking a shape lies in shape mimicking a single thing, while event encapsulates things in general. To accentuate this distinction, [Xu Shen's example of mimicking shape] chooses sun and moon, and [the example of pointing an event] opts for up and down: up and down incorporate many things, while sun and moon are singular instances. Once scholars come to understand this, they will be able to grasp the difference between pointing an event and mimicking the shape.

The abstract and the concrete, according to Duan Yucai, do not exclude one another.

But even if many characters span the two opening principles, the two need to be differentiated. The interpreter needs to recognize whether, in a particular instance, the character is to refer to the general notion or the specific entity. While characters do not point exclusively to events or shapes, actualities are of these two kinds. The dual aspect of general idea and concrete shape is even more prominently displayed in Xu Shen's treatment of the five phases.

The five phases

艸 *mù* 冒也冒地而生東方之行从中下象其根 (卷五)

Tree is to say **cover**. It **covers** the ground and grows. It is the eastern phase. The graph follows sprouting, the bottom part depicts its roots.

火 *huǒ* 火燬也南方之行炎而上象形 (卷十)

Fire is to say **blaze/destroy**. As a phase it corresponds to south. The graph mimics the shape of ascending flames.

☵ *shuǐ* 準也北方之行象眾水並流中有微陽之氣也⁴⁴ (卷十一)

Water is to say **level**. As a phase it corresponds to north. Mimics the shape of masses of water flowing together. In the middle it has the indistinct yang vapor.

☷ *tǔ* 地之吐生物者也二象地之下地之中物出形也 (卷十三)

Earth is to say the ground **spitting out** and giving birth to entities. The two horizontal lines mimic the shape of an entity emerging from down inside the earth.

☱ *jīn* 五色金也...西方之行生於土从土左右注象金在土中形今聲 (卷十四)

Metal of five colors. ... As a phase it corresponds to west. It is born from earth, therefore the graph follows earth. The dots on the sides mimic the [radiant] appearance of metal in earth. The character is potentially cognate with characters pronounced like 今.

Metal seems an exception among the five phases, as it is not connected to a paronomastic gloss. However, it contains an explicit *Bedeutungsträger*, and, as Duan Yucai observes, "all characters that use 金 or 今 for sound share the meaning of **curbing** 凡金聲今聲之字皆有禁制之義." (390). Rather than being an exception, "metal" shows that an explicit paronomastic gloss and the "A 聲" analysis fulfill the same role. *Explaining Names* (釋天), which follows Xu Shen in three of the four preceding cases, states: "**metal** is to say **curb** 金禁也." Thus each of the five graphs depicts a concrete entity, while each of the sound based associations imbue the term with a general notion. The five phases have both a manifestation and a function. In this they come close to the eight trigrams of *Change*.

Eight trigrams

The eight trigrams inspire highly influential sound explanations. Each trigram has a name, function, and manifestation. In seven cases the "Explaining Trigrams 說卦" Wing of the *Change* uses sound to relate a trigram's name to its basic function:

⁴⁴ Following Duan Yucai. (516) Deng Tingchen does not indicate rhyme.

乾健也坤順也震動也巽巽也(健而巽小畜)坎陷(險)也離麗也艮止也兌說也

Qian is **vigorous**, *kun* **complies**, *zhen* **moves**, *xun* **conforms**, *kan* is **danger**, *li* is **cohesion**, *gen* **restrains**, *dui* **delights**.

The name of a trigram allows for the association of a characteristic attribute. *Gen*, or, restraint, is the only trigram without a sound gloss. This may well not be accidental: the choice not to gloss through sound is the interpreter's way of exercising control over the material.

Each trigram is also associated with a particular phenomenon. If the two Verdict Wings concentrate on the functional aspect of trigrams, the two Image Wings take into account the manifestation aspect. So *qian* manifests as heaven, *kun* as earth, *zhen* as thunder, *xun* as wind or wood, *kan* as water, *li* as fire, *gen* as mountain, and *dui* as marsh. Exegetical traditions of the *Change* repeatedly differentiate between force and shape. Thus the Image gloss on the *kun* hexagram specifies that "the force of earth complies 地勢坤," a statement further clarified by Wang Bi: "the physical shape of earth does not comply, its force complies 地形不順其勢順." (坤象注 Commentary on *Kun* Image #2)

乾 is the only trigram related through pronunciation to both its force and shape.⁴⁵ 坤, on the other hand, is the only trigram in Xu Shen's work linked to its manifestation: "*Kun* is earth. It is one of the trigrams/hexagrams. 坤地也易之卦也" (卷十三 土部) Each trigram stands for an abstract notion as well as concrete manifestation. With the exception of *gen*, abstract notion is always located through sound. And with the exception of *qian*, concrete manifestation is not posited through sound.

⁴⁵ Since the *Shuowen* glosses heaven as top and *qian* as rising, it is safe to posit a meaning connection alongside the same rhyme category.

Hexagrams

Paronomasia is also used to explain some of the hexagrams. So the Sequence of Hexagrams, the Wing of the *Change* that bases exegesis on the traditional order in which hexagrams have been passed down, links these connotations to hexagrams through sound:

嗑者合也 **Biting** is to say **merge**.
頤者養也 **Jaws** is to say **nourish**.
遯者退也 **Withdrawal** is to say **step back**.
晉者進也 **Advance** is to say **move forward**.
睽者乖也 **Strabismus** is to say **contradict**.
夬者決也 **Resolve** is to say **decide**.
漸者進也 **Gradualness** is to say **progress**.

Paronomasia also appears in the two Verdict Wings, a tradition of exegesis that develops the comprehensive hexagram (rather than individual line) statements:

需須也 **Detainment** is to say **wait**.
貞正也 **Authenticate** is to say **correct** *.
比輔也 **Assistance** is to say **help**.
觀盥也灌也 **Discernment** is to say **ritual ablution**, is to say **libation**.
復反也 **Return** is to say **revert**.
咸感也 **Reciprocity** is to say **stir**.

* 貞 is a key term rather than a hexagram name. " **Authenticate** is to say **correct**" is arguably *the* most consequential sound gloss of Ancient China, connecting the moral concerns of the Warring States/Han periods with the divination practice of the early dynasties. The sound gloss is ostentatibly missing in the *Shuowen*: afterall, *not* to gloss through sound is also a choice.

Abstraction as representation

Two of the hexagrams inspire interpretations that vividly illustrate the tradition's knack for explaining pure abstraction by resorting to physical shape:

Jaws



Three-legged cauldron



The full and broken lines in six positions denote the constellation of yin and yang forces. In general, they figure a situation on a purely abstract level. In these two cases, however, the abstract notation suggests more. The full line at the bottom and the full line at the top of the Jaws hexagram are interpreted as the lower and upper jaw bones. The two pairs of broken lines in the middle stand for lower and upper rows of teeth. The broken line at the bottom of the Cauldron hexagram depicts the feet, the two full lines above it represent the full body of the cauldron. The next full line is the lid, the next broken line are the ears, the top full line is the rod inserted through the ears to carry the cauldron. The trigram based interpretation, which regards each complex situation (hexagram) as the doubling of basic situations (trigrams), further rationalizes the choice of manifestation, or, name of the hexagram: the bottom trigram in the Jaws, *zhen*, is denotative of movement, the top trigram, *gen*, symbolizes immovability. The lower jaw moves, the upper jaw is fixed. The bottom trigram in the Cauldron, *xun*, stands for wood, the top trigram, *li*, symbolizes fire. Fire blazing from wood heats the cauldron.

The trigram based interpretation of the Cauldron inspires Xu Shen's graphic analysis of the corresponding graph 鼎, whereby the bottom portion of the graph is

interpreted as two chipped logs of wood (𣎵). Consequently, the cauldron 鼎 domain follows the chipped log 𣎵 domain. This apparently unorthodox explanation is countered by Wang Yun's common sense idea that the graph depicts the shape of a cauldron, with feet, body, and ears, which modern paleographers like to prop up with oracle bone and bronze graphs.⁴⁶ In the process they miss Xu Shen's point: graphic explanation is not so much about *what* a graph originally depicted as about *how* it can rigorously, i.e., in accordance with legitimate exegetical procedures of the time, be explained as depicting.

If an abstract notation can be explained as mimicking shape, an obviously mimicking shape depiction may inversely be explained as abstract notation. So Xu Shen interprets the water graph 𣶒 as both mimicking the shape of flowing water and the rotated appearance of the *kan* trigram ䷜: "mimics the shape of masses of water flowing together. In the middle it has indistinct yang vapor. 象眾水並流中有微陽之氣也"

Sound gloss matching graphic analysis

While Xu Shen's choice of gloss for the multivalent "heaven" may be based on the *Huainanzi*, it also exhibits a feature unique to the *Shuowen*: its sound and graphic criteria match. 𡗗 combines intentions of two ancient script graphs: 𡗗 depicts a man with head, hands, and legs, 一 stands here for up, just like in the ancient script variant 𡗗 of 帝. The gloss vertex (頂 or 顛) points out the graphic intention (字意). Xu Shen may have chosen this particular sound gloss of heaven because it is confirmed by graphic information.

⁴⁶ Xu Fu and Song Wenmin (2003) p. 203.

Here also lies another distinction between Xu Shen's and Liu Xi's sound glosses: where Liu Xi is glossing names (sound only), Xu Shen glosses characters (sound and shape).

The match between sound gloss and graphic appearance is also detectable in Xu Shen's two examples of mimicking shape:

日 *rì* 實也太陽之精不虧从口一象形 (卷七 日部)

Sun is to say **full**. It is the essence of the ultimate yang, it never diminishes. The graph combines the intentions of to encircle and of the full yang line.


月 *yuè* 闕也大陰之精象形 (卷七 月部)

Moon is to say **wane**. It is the essence of the great yin.


The outside boundary of the sun graph mimics the shape of the celestial body, the line inside indicates its fullness. This inside line, which denotes the abstract notion, corresponds to Xu Shen's sound gloss. In the case of the moon graph, shape and function are denoted by the same graphic component: the graph depicts the sliver of a moon, both the shape and the process. By connecting the character with a verb, an abstract concept is located through sound in its graphic rendering. By approaching the graph as mimicking shape, the noun is tied to a singular entity. While the attributes of fullness or waning belong to various entities, Sun and Moon are singular manifestations of these concepts. But while the sun may, in a particular worldview, be always considered full, moon alternates waning and waxing.⁴⁷ The sound of the word sun allows the term to be linked to a condition that is always the case. The sound of the word moon, on the other hand, serves to interpret the sliver in a particular way: the graph depicts waning rather than waxing moon. There are stretches of time when the moon waxes, as well as instances of new and full moon. The sound of the word denotes a condition that obtains only part of the time.

⁴⁷ According to *Comprehensive Discussions in the White Tiger Hall*, the moon waxes and then wanes. 月之爲言闕也有滿有闕 (Gui Fu, 1998, p. 592)

The following list consists of domain graphs in which a sound gloss -- in a more or a less obvious way -- informs graphic explanation:

 *bā* 別也象分別相背之形


Eight is to say **separate**. Mimics the shape of **dividing** and **separating** things, so that they stand back to back.

 *biàn* 辨別也象獸指爪分別也凡采之屬皆从采讀若辨

Discriminate and **separate**. Mimics the **differentiated** animal toes and claws. Reads like to **discriminate**.

 *zǒu* 趨也从夭止夭止者屈也


To **hurry** is to say **rush**. Combines the intentions of slant and foot. To slant feet is to twist.

 *gòng* 同也从廿升

Common is to say **put together**. Mimics hands joined together.

 *yú* 共舉也从从讀若余

To **haul up** is to **hoist** together. Combines intentions of scooping and joining hands. It reads like the exhalation 余.

 *chén* 牽也事君也象屈服之形

Official is related in meaning and pronunciation to **pull a buffalo by a string**. He works for a lord. Mimics the shape of bending to serve.

 *yáo* 交也象易六爻頭交也

[Hexagram] **lines** is to say **intersect**. Mimics the six **lines** of the *Change intersecting*.

 *kě* 肯也从口𠂔𠂔亦聲


Allow is related in meaning and pronunciation to **sinews** [which **stick** to the bone]. Combines intentions of mouth/speaking and obstructed exhalation.

 *xī* 語所稽也从𠂔八象氣越𠂔也

Speech is **arrested** at the interjection *xī*. Follows obstructed exhalation, 八 mimics drawn out and maintained exhalation.

 *yú* 於也象氣之舒𠂔从𠂔从一一者其氣平之也


The interjection of **composure** *yú* is related in meaning and pronunciation to the **assisting** interjection *wū*. Mimics the exhaled air **relaxed** and **composed**. Follows detained exhalation and the horizontal line. The horizontal line indicates the exhalation being level.

 hàn 𦰩也艸木之華未發函然象形讀若含

Bud is to say **gulp**. Mimics the shape of grass or tree blossom not having yet opened, crouching inside like a **rolled up tongue**. It reads like to **hold in the mouth**.

 piàn 判木也从半木

Splinter is to say **split** timber. Combines intentions of **halved** and log.

 mào 冡而前也从冡从目


To **cap** is to **don a hat** tilting it forward.

 bì 敗衣也从巾象衣敗之形

Torn is to say **damaged** garment. Follows cloth, mimics the shape of being **damaged**.

 yī 依也上曰衣下曰裳象覆二人之形

Garment is to say **lean on**. Top is referred to as garment, bottom is referred to as kilt. Mimics the shape of two people being covered.

 xiōng 長也


Amplify is to say **far and long**.

 xiān 前進也从儿从之


Ahead is to say advance **forward**. Combines intentions of man and to move.

 biāo 長髮森森也


Unkempt refers to long hair in a state of being **disheveled like a dog**.

 yìn 執政所持信也从爪从卩

Stamp is what a person in the position of power uses to endow [a letter] with **trust**. Combines intentions of grasp and tally.

 jí 自急救也从羊省从包省从口口猶慎言也

Self-control is to say **anxiously** tie up oneself. Combines intentions of sheep, embrace, and mouth. Mouth stands for being circumspect in words.

 zè 側傾也从人在厂下 注曰傾下曰仄也此仄下云傾也是之謂轉注古與側昃字相假借 (447) 側旁也从人則聲不正曰仄不中曰側二義有別而經傳多通用如反側當爲反仄仄者未全反也 (373) **Stooping** is to say **slanted**, tilted. Follows man under a cliff. Duan Yucai: Tilted being glossed as stooping; sloping being glossed as tilted, this convergence. In the past tilted and tipping were used interchangeably. Slanted is leaning to the side. ... Not straight is stooping, not centered is slanted. The two meanings can be separated, yet the classics and the commentaries use them indiscriminately. Like slanting over and over should really be stooping over and over. Stooping refers to not completely overturned.



wán 圓傾側而轉者从反仄

Pellet is to say **round**, i.e., to tilt, slant, and **revolve**. The graph inverts stooping.



quán 水原也象水流出成川形

Spring is to say water **source**. It mimics the shape of water flowing out and turning into a stream.



yǒng 長也象水逕理之長

Perpetual is to say **far and long**. Mimics the **farness** of the grid of rivulets.



fēi 違也从飛下鞞取其相背

To **deny** is to **disobey**. The graph follows flying with wings hanging down and grasps its aspect of being back to back.



mín 眾萌也从古文之象

The **people** is to say multitudes **sprouting**. Mimics the shape of the ancient graph.



yáo 土高也从三土

Mound is to say earth **standing tall**. Combines three earths.



lěi 累垝土為牆壁象形

Pile is to say **heap** and pound earth for a wall. Mimics the shape.



wǔ 五行也从二陰陽在天地間交午也

Five refers to the five phases. Follows two: yin and yang come into contact and **counter** each other between heaven and earth, (which the number two stands for).

Three somewhat special, and therefore listed out of order and elaborated, cases for the end:




tián 陳也樹穀曰田象四口十阡陌之制也

Field is to say **align**. The place where grains are planted is referred to as field. Mimics four enclosed areas. Ten stands for the system of thousands and hundreds, (i.e., acreage).

Two graphic explanations stand side by side. In one (inspired by pronunciation) the graph mimics the shape of four enclosed areas; in the other the numeral ten is inscribed inside an enclosed area to indicate an acreage based (multiply by ten) allotment of land. If single works can list alternative sound glosses, so it is also possible for Xu Shen to

occasionally put forth various graphic explanations within the same entry. Compare with "A *jí* 三合也从入一象三合之形 ... 讀若集 Three combining. Follows enter and one. The graph mimics the shape of three combining. ... It reads like to gather." The first explanation is occasioned by the need to link the graph to 入, the immediately preceding domain. The second explanation is inspired by the read-like gloss. In contrast to these two cases where Xu Shen suggests two equally valid graphic explanations, glosses that introduce an alternative explanation with the formula "another opinion states 一曰" contrast, from Xu Shen's point of view, a legitimate with an unjustified interpretation:

 *jiū* 相糾繚也一曰瓜瓠結𠂔起象形

To be **intertwined**. Another opinion explains the graph as the string-like stalks of gourd winding around. Mimics the shape.

 *tǐng* 善也从人土土事也一曰象物出地挺生也

Upright is good. Combines intentions of man and aspirant. Aspirant is to say serve. The graph is also explained as mimicking an entity emerging out of the earth growing **strong and erect**.

The first case privileges pronunciation inspired explanation over a purely graph based one. And, quite the opposite, the second case considers upright to refer to the moral quality of an aspiring aristocrat, listing the pronunciation motivated explanation "the erect appearance of a plant emerging from the earth" as a rejected alternative.

While in the above cases sound gloss and graphic explanation reinforce each other, in the domain entries listed hereafter the sound gloss introduces an aspect not contained in the graph.

Sound gloss complementing graphic explanation

王

wáng 天下所歸往也董仲舒曰古之造文者三畫而連其中謂之王三者天地人也而參通之者王也孔子曰一貫三爲王

The world **comes back** to the **king**. Dong Zhongshu states: In antiquity when [Cang Jie] created the graph, he drew three lines and connected them in the middle to refer to the king. The three lines symbolize heaven, earth, and man, and the one connecting the three is the king. [The apocryphal] Confucius states: "One stringing three together denotes king."

士

shì 事也數始於一終於十从一从十孔子曰推十合一爲士

An **aspirant** is related in meaning and pronunciation to **serve**. Counting begins in one and ends in ten. The graph follows one and ten. [The apocryphal] Confucius states: "To put ten together to make one denotes aspirant."

古

gǔ 故也从十口識前言者也

Past is to say **reason**. Combines intentions of ten mouths, the means by which one knows what had been stated long before.

競

jìng 競言也从二言 ... 讀若競

To **argue** is to say **quarrel**. Combines two mouths. ... Reads like **quarrel**.

競

jìng 彊語也

Quarrel is to say **forced** discussion.

教

jiào 上所施下所效也从支从孝

Instruction is when the one in a superior position causes one in an inferior position to **imitate**. Follows to stroke and filial.

烏

wū 孝鳥也象形孔子曰烏吁呼也取其助氣故以爲烏呼

Crow is a filial bird. Mimics the shape. [The apocryphal] Confucius states: "The **crow** crows **wūhū**." Taking the aspect of its helping exhalation, it is used for the assisting interjection.

𠂔

yǎo 小也象子初生之形

Is to say **minute**. Mimics the shape of a child just born.

刃

rèn 刀堅也象刀有刃之形

Sharpness is the **hardness** of knife. Mimics the shape of a sharp knife.

鼓

gǔ 鼓郭也

Drum is to say **pop**.

𠂔 *rù* 內也

To **enter** is to say **inside**.

𠂔 *jiǔ* 从後灸之象人兩脛後有距也

To **roast** from the back. The graph mimics the shape of space behind the back of two shins.

𠂔 *yǎn* 旌旗之游 𠂔 蹇之兒从中曲而下垂 𠂔 相出入也讀若偃

The appearance of a flag flowing and **flapping obstructed**. Follows the shape of soaring and bending to hang down, coming in and out. Reads like **take down**.

晶 *jīng* 精光也从三日

Intense luminosity. Follows three suns.

𠂔 *xī* 莫也从月半見

Dusk is to say **evening**. Mimics half visible moon.

晉 *jìn* 進也日出萬物進从日从銓易曰明出地上晉

Progression is to say **advancement**. Sun comes out and the myriad entities **advance**.

Combines the intentions of sun and to reach. The [Verdict Wing of the] *Change* says: The brightness of sun emerges out of the earth (*li* brilliance trigram above *kun* earth trigram), this is Progression.

尾 *wěi* 微也从毛在尸後古人或飾系尾西南夷亦然

Tail is to say **indistinct**. Follows upside down hair behind human body.

鬼 *guǐ* 人所歸爲鬼从人象鬼頭鬼陰气賊害从厶 神陽鬼陰陽公陰私

Ghost is what a person **returns** to. The graph follows man and mimics an eerie head. The yin vapor damages and hurts, that is why the graph follows private/selfish. Duan Yucai: Spirit is a yang thing, ghost is a yin thing. Yang favors the communal, yin is possessive.

山 *shān* 宣也宣气散生萬物有石而高象形

Mountain is to say **disperse**. It **disperses** the vapor and scatters it to give birth to myriad entities. It mimics the shape of having stones and being high.

戶 *hù* 護也半門曰戶象形


Eave is to say **protect/call upon**. Half of a door is called eave. The graph mimics shape.

門 *mén* 聞也从二戶象形


Door is to say **hear**. Mimics the shape of two eaves.

我 *wǒ* 施身自謂也 ...

I is the **mover** of the body, the self-designation.


 *qín* 禁也象形 白虎通曰琴禁也以禁止淫邪正人心也 (633)

A **string instrument** is to say **inhibit**. The *Comprehensive Discussion in the White Tiger Hall* states: "To curb and inhibit lust and depravity, to set straight the heart and the mind."



 *jū* 薦也从几足有二橫一其下地也

Sacrificial altar is to say **present**. Follows a table with two planks spanning its legs. The horizontal line is the earth below it.


A subcategory in this class of sound glosses that supplement graphic analysis consists of the following animal domain graphs:

 *niú* 事也理也⁴⁸ 象角頭三封尾之形


Buffalo is related in meaning and pronunciation to **serve** as well as to **structure**. The graph mimics the shape of the two horns and head (three), broad shoulders, and tail.

 *yáng* 祥也从  象頭角足尾之形孔子曰牛羊之字以形舉也

Sheep is to say **auspicious**. Mimics the shape of head, horns, feet, and tail. [The apocryphal] Confucius states: "The graphs for sheep and buffalo denote by means of shape."

 *mǎ* 怒也武也象馬頭髦尾四足之形

Horse is related in meaning and pronunciation to **fury** as well as to **martial prowess**. Mimics the shape of horse head, mane, tail, and four feet.

 *guī* 舊也外骨內肉者也從龜頭與它頭同天地之性廣肩無雄龜鼈之類以它為雄象足甲尾之形

Turtle is to say **old**. Outside there is bone, inside there is meat. Follows snake because turtle head is same as snake head. It is the species that unites heaven and earth, with broad shoulders. Turtles do not have males, so turtles and tortoises take a snake for a male.⁴⁹ Mimics feet, carapace, and tailend.

I have focused on domain heading graphs without an explicit phonetic/meaning carrier as in these cases one cannot fall back on either the "falls in the cognitive domain of" or "is potentially cognate with" categorization based types of explanation. The paronomastic glosses attached to these graphs serve two functions. Either they help to interpret how a particular graph denotes its reference, or they provide additional

⁴⁸ Following Duan Yucan's emendation. To serve is to say to be able to complete its task. Buffalo performs ploughing as its task. Structure refers to the fact that its constitution can be differentiated. As in Cook Ding slicing up a buffalo according to Heavenly structure. (50)

⁴⁹ Based on 列子 *Liezi* (678).

information altogether different from the graph. The first type tends to consist of graphs that fall toward the abstract end of the pointing-an-event/mimicking the shape spectrum.)(interpreted as to split, 𠂇 interpreted as to intertwine, 𠂆 interpreted as lines intersecting, or 𠂇 interpreted as yin and yang clashing between heaven and earth all image an abstract idea. 𠂇 interpreted both as differentiation and animal paws, 𠂇 interpreted both as to gulp and a budding flower, 𠂇 interpreted both as to split and a splinter, 𠂇 interpreted both as tall and earth mound all resemble 𠂇 and 𠂇 in denoting both an abstract idea and concrete shape. The second type tends to consist of graphs that either closely mimic the shape, such as the four animal domain graphs 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇, 𠂇 tail, 𠂇 mountain, 𠂇 eave, 𠂇 door, or combine intentions, such as 𠂇 aspirant, 𠂇 past, or 𠂇 ghost. The sound gloss in this second type enables the exegesis to go beyond the obvious *what* is being depicted.

To summarize the point of the preceding section, an image, both as a real world manifestation and as a graphic rendering of an idea, means more than its physical shape. Whether by the means of graphic rendering highlighted by a sound gloss, or by the means of a sound gloss only, a character *interprets* rather than simply *identifies* its referent.

Paronomastic explanations in the *Shuowen* are not limited to domain heading graphs. Below I list sound glosses from three domains. I have chosen the domains of stop and go (𠂇), woman/wife (𠂇), and snake/insect (𠂇) for three reasons. First, they exhibit higher (14, 11, 19) than average (8 percent) rate of sound based glosses. Second, with 16, 27, and 29 instantiations each selection constitutes a set large enough to be able to generalize from, yet small enough for each gloss to receive individual treatment in an essay of this scope. Finally, each set highlights a different aspect of paronomasia in the *Shuowen*.

Stop and go domain

16 out of 118 entires contain a sound gloss, about 14 percent.

𨔵 wàng 往也 **Fear/flee** is to say **tread away**.

𨔵 zūn 循也 **Comply** is to say **abide by**. (Based on *Standard*, 釋詁)

𨔵 zào 就也 **Create** is related in meaning and pronunciation to **make last**.

𨔵 tà 𨔵 也 **To trail** is to say **closely follow one another**.

𨔵 hé 逕也 **Closely follow one another** is to say **trail**.

𨔵 nì 迎也 ... 關東曰逆關西曰迎 **To encounter** is to say **happen upon**. ... East of the Pass they say **encounter**; west of the Pass they say **happen upon**. (Based on *Dialects*)

𨔵 gòu 遇也 **Cross paths** is to say **meet**. (Based on *Standard*, 釋詁)

𨔵 dí 道也 **Trail** is related in meaning and pronunciation to **way**. (Based on *Standard*, 釋詁)

𨔵 tōng 達也 按達之訓行不相遇也通正相反經傳中通達同訓者正亂亦訓治徂亦訓存之理(71) **Connect** is related in meaning and pronunciation to **miss**. Duan Yucai settles: Miss is glossed as walk without running into each other, just the opposite of connect. Connect being glossed in the commentaries on the classics as miss is based just on the same principle as chaos glossed as order or proceed glossed as stay in one place, (i.e., antonymic gloss).

𨔵 xùn 遁也 **Evade** is to say **shift**.

𨔵 fǎn 還也 **Return** is to say **come around**. (Based on *Standard*, 釋言, order inverted)

𨔵 xuǎn 遣也 **Select** is to say **dispatch**.

𨔵 wēi 逶迤衰去之兒 **Twisting and winding** is the appearance of being crooked.

𨔵 liè 擽也 **Catch up** is to say **bump**.

𨔵 zhì 迤也晉趙曰迤 To **detain** is to say **hold up**. In Jin and Zhao they say **detain**.

𨔵 lóu 連邊也 Is to say **linked** and **continuous**.

Fourteen sound glosses link characters that fall in the same, or roughly equivalent (𠂔 small step) cognitive domain. In most cases, the glossing and the glossed characters are listed in proximity of each other. They thus fulfill Serruys's "strict criteria" of a converging gloss, i.e., combine similarity of pronunciation, same domain, and similar meaning.⁵⁰ The logical exception to the "listed in proximity" rule is the gloss "to connect is to say miss 通達也," where two terms featured in distant synonym clusters are linked through opposition. By having their glossing words listed in proximity, the entries fall within the general pattern of synonym clusters in the *Shuowen*. Consider, for example, the following sequence within this domain:

逆	迎	逢	會	逢	遇	遇	遇	相
也	也	也	也	也	也	也	也	遇
								驚
								也

How do the two paronomastic glosses 逆迎也 and 邁遇也 differ from the remaining six? The continuation of the 逆 entry, "east of the pass they say *nì* (疑 ancient initial), west of the pass they say *yíng* (疑 ancient initial) 關東曰逆關西曰迎," provides one explanation. Sound glosses like this *Dialects*-based one accentuate cognate relationship between words from different dialects. Similar situation arises in the 逆 entry: "逆也晉趙曰逆 In Jin and Zhao they say *zhì*, [in the rest of the country they say *liè*] (both terms fall in Duan Yucai's fifteenth rhyme category)." The two glosses constitute Zhang Taiyan's prototypical cases of convergence, understood as a means of spanning diverse dialects. While in the 逆 and 逆 entries Xu Shen explicitly mentions regional

⁵⁰ Serruys identifies and briefly discusses 179 cases that fulfill such strict criteria. (1958, pp. 164-192)

difference, the specification is missing elsewhere. Consider an entry in the fire domain:

"𤇗火也" based on *Dialects* (10): "In Qi they say *huǐ* for *huǒ* 齊言𤇗火也."⁵¹ While there is no doubt that many *Shuowen* sound glosses fit Zhang Taiyan's *Dialects* inspired understanding of convergence, extending this core idea to the paronomastic phenomenon in general is difficult.

But even if two similarly pronounced characters may have originated in dialect variation, once they become part of one synchronic system their divergence may result in semantic differentiation. Consider the following case:

𡗗 *mín* 眾萌也从古文之象 𡗗

The **people** is to say multitudes **sprouting**. Mimics the shape of the ancient graph.

𡗗 *méng* 民也从民亡聲讀若盲

The **masses** is to say the **people**. Falls in the cognitive domain of people and is potentially cognate with words pronounced as 亡. It reads like **blind/illiterate**.

The gloss 氓民也 is taken from the *Dialects* (3), where its listing likely entails that the two characters reflect regional variation. The sound gloss 民眾萌也, common during the Han, interprets here the Ancient Script variant, making the strokes chaotically pointing in various directions symbolize the idea of sprouting. Duan Yucui, playing the part of a Han exegete and creating his own sound gloss, links sprouting through sound to ignorance (萌猶懵懵無知兒也 627). The connection finds support in the nexus of meanings associated with the *Meng* hexagram (Youthful Ignorance). The Sequence of Hexagrams explains: "*Tun* (Birth Pangs, first hexagram after the opening *Qian-Kun* pair) stands for entities being first born. When things are first born, they are necessarily

⁵¹ 火果, glossed in the same *Dialects* entry as "火也楚轉語也" is missing in the *Shuowen*. Liu Xiang's choice of term for dialect variation (轉語) supports Zhang Taiyan's interpretation of convergence (轉注) as not different from dialect variation.

inexperienced, therefore Birth Pangs is followed by Youthful Ignorance. **Ignorance** is to say *thick headedness*. It refers to things being young like newly sprouted grain. 屯者物之始生也物生必蒙故受之以蒙蒙者蒙也物之穉也" More support for Duan Yucai's interpretation is found in the alternative analysis of the 昏 (darkness) graph, which explains the top component of the graph as the simplified 民 *Bedeutungsträger*, implying cognate relationship between people and darkness. (卷七 日部) In his analysis of the 昏 graph as including simplified 氏 phonetic, Xu Shen, however, does not endorse this interpretation. Comparing Xu Xuan's and Duan Yucai's Ancient Graph variants of 民, one notices substantial difference: Xu Xuan's aspect of tips sprouting in multiple directions is missing in Duan Yucai's rendering of the graph, which primarily denotes disarray (仿佛古文之體少整齊之也).⁵² The perceived meaning of the character determines the details of its graphic rendering. Choosing to follow Xu Xuan here, I interpret Xu Shen's sound gloss "sprouting" as contrasting with the "blind/illiterate 讀若盲" read-like gloss of the following graph. "People" can be named through "sprouting" (auspicious), or through "ignorance" (inauspicious). The two terms may have the same origin and referent, but opposed connotations in regard to fortune. Proceeding from an original sound gloss (氓民也) Xu Shen adds two additional sound glosses (萌盲) to differentiate value.⁵³

⁵² The different rendering testifies of the degree to which one is dealing with Xu Xuan's or Duan Yucai's Ancient Graph, Xu Shen's may have still been different. And in a similar way, Xu Shen's Small Seal was not Li Si's Small Seal, as Galambos (2002, pp. 57-62) demonstrates.

⁵³ Varying degrees of auspiciousness also differentiate the two alliterating designations for dragon: 龍, glossed as 龍, is cognate with 靈 (numinous), while 龍 is cognate with 聾 (deaf -- dragon, in popular imagination, is earless). (卷十二 龍部)

If the previous entries were based on the *Dialects*, the gloss 邁遇也 is taken from the *Standard*. While the two terms may share a referent, the manner of referring varies. 邁 is cognate with cross beam (犇交積材也), eye-contact (覲遇見也), and remarried (媾重婚也), the general meaning being "again, across." 遇 is cognate with yoked ploughs (耦耒廣五寸爲伐二伐爲耦) and puppet, double (偶桐人也), the core meaning being "paired up." The sound gloss of eye-contact, which also includes 遇, shows that at stake in the *Shuowen* is not just the identity of one referent, but also the connection between the two abstract concepts of "again" and "paired up." The gloss links not just the concrete *what*, but also the abstract *how*.

Four of the eighteen sound glosses in this domain appear in the *Standard*. Paronomasia is part of the classical lexicon. But where in the reference rooted *Standard* sound connection is an accidental property of two synonyms, in the sound and cognitive categorization based *Shuowen* it facilitates a conceptual give-and-take between two abstract notions. Where the *Standard* is about the overlapping of referential counterparts, the *Shuowen* concerns interpenetration of conceptual categories. Moreover, sound connection has a formal, i.e., phenomenal, basis, thus contrasting with the idea of "structure exists without form 空中有理." It is also language specific, i.e., its grid of semantic connections is cultural. To prioritize sound connection over a purely conceptual one is to root thinking in language.

Finally, let me note that sound connection may also result in binomial expressions rather than just glosses. Such linking of akin pronunciations carries the connotations of a winding, twisting appearance (逶迤 rhyme) and of continuity (連邊也 alliteration).

Woman/wife domain

27 out of 238 entries contain a sound gloss, about 11 percent.

姓

xìng 人所生也古之神聖母感天而生子故稱天子从女从生生亦聲 (Based on *White Tiger Hall Discussion*) **Surname** is what a person is **born** with. In ancient times, the Holy Mother moved Heaven and **gave birth** to a son, therefore he is called the Son of Heaven. The character combines the intentions of woman and come to life, and is potentially cognate with words pronounced like 生.

媒

méi 謀也謀合二姓 注曰周禮媒氏注云媒之言謀也謀合異類使和成者又媒氏掌萬民之判注云判半也得偶爲合主合其半成夫婦也(612) (Gui Fu, 1998, p. 1079)

To **match make** is to **discuss** a difficult situation. Precisely, to **discuss** how to fit two families. Duan Yucai: The Commemary on the *Rites of Zhou*, Match Maker section states: "The linguistic property of to match make is to discuss a plan. To plan to match up different kinds so as to make them harmonize with one another." The *Rites of Zhou* also state: "Match maker is in charge of people's divisions." Commentary to the *Rites*: "To **divide** is to **separate**. To obtain a suitable partner is to match up. The Match-maker is in charge of matching up separate halves to become husband and wife."

酌

shuò 酌也斟酌二姓也 To **serve as the go in between** is to **pour over**. To **pour over whether** to match two families **or not**.

娶

qǔ 取婦也从女从取取亦聲 (Based on *White Tiger Hall Discussion*)
To **marry** is to **seize** a wife.

婚

hūn 婦家也禮娶婦以昏時婦人陰也故曰婚从女从昏昏亦聲 (Based on *Standard*, 釋親: 婿之父爲姻婦之父爲婚)

The bride's family is referred to as **hūn**. According to the *Classic of Rites*, one is to take up a wife at **dawn or dusk**, for wife represents the *yin* element, therefore one calls them **hūn**. The graph combines the intentions of woman and dusk; dusk also stands for the sound.

姻

yīn 婿家也女之所因故曰姻从女从因因亦聲 (Based on *Standard*, 釋親: 婦之黨爲婚兄弟婿之黨爲姻兄弟) The groom's family is referred to as **yīn**. It is that on which a woman **depends**, therefore one calls them **yīn**. The graph combines the intentions of woman and cause; cause also stands for the sound.

妻

qī 婦與夫齊者也从女从中从又又持事妻職也 古文妻 ...

To be a **spouse** is to be a wife **equal** to the husband. The graph follows woman, rising, and right hand. Right hand manages affairs. To be a spouse is to be in charge. Ancient Script conceives the graph as combining the intentions of woman and to value highly.

婦 fù 服也从女持帚灑掃也

Wife is to **serve**. The graph depicts a woman holding a broom and sweeping.

妃 fēi 匹也从女己(聲) (614) To **match** is to say to **go together**.

嬖 pì 妃也从女毘聲 (Based on *Standard*, 釋詁, reverse order)

To **complement** is to **match**.

娠 shēn 女妊身動也 注曰凡从辰之字皆有動意震振是也 ... 詩大任有身生此文王傳曰身重也蓋妊而後重重而後動動而後生 (614) A woman becomes pregnant, her **belly shows being heavy with a baby**, the baby **moves**. Duan Yucai: All characters pronounced like 辰 have the sense of movement. Just like thunder or shake. ... *Poems*: "Daren showed a belly and gave birth to King Wen." Mao: "To show a belly is to be heavy with a child." [The various terms] likely [differentiate]: a woman first becomes pregnant, then her belly becomes heavy with a child, then the child moves, and then it is born.

𠂔 mǔ 牧也 To **mother** is related in pronunciation and meaning to **cow herd**.

嫗 xǔ 嫗也 **Mummy** is to say **mom**.

婢 bì 女之卑者也从女从卑卑亦聲 始女之初初裁皆衣之始 ... 凡言之者皆分別之詞 (617) **Slave girl** epitomizes the **state of being destitute** in the woman domain. Duan Yucai: 始 epitomize beginning in the woman domain, 初裁 epitomize start in the clothing domain ... all entries that include the particle 之 use it to differentiate [the exact reference].

媿 wā 古之神聖女化萬物者也 禍害也神不福也 (卷一 示部)

Wā is the ancient numinous and sagely Woman who **transforms** the myriad entities. For contrast: **Disaster** is to say **harm**. The term denotes a state when spirits do not help.

𡇗 wǎn 婉也 婉順也 **Graceful** is to say **amenable**. (Amenable is compliant.)

𡇗 wěi 委隨也从女从禾 To **pursue zigzag**.

𡇗 jìng 靜也 **Serene** is to say **calm**.

𡇗 shì 諦也 **Shì** is related in meaning and pronunciation to **truth**.

嬖 pín 服也毛傳嬖婦也 **Consort** is to say **serve**. Mao Commentary: **Pín** is to say **wife**.

𡇗 zhì 至也从女執聲 讀若摯同 **Zhì** is to say **reach**. It reads the same with **to grasp**.

晏 yàn 安也从女日 **Yàn** is to say **calm down**.

擅 shàn ... 一曰傳也 ... Another opinion explains **shàn** as to **transmit**.

媛 yuàn 美女也人所援也从女从爰爰引也 **Attractive** refers to a beautiful woman. She is something people are **drawn** to. ... Follows 爰, which is to say **to pull**.

儻 niǎn 下志貪頑也从女覃聲讀若深 **Niǎn** refers to the **greediness** of the inferior intention ... Reads like deep.

嫫 cǎn 婪也 **Cǎn** is to say to **covet**.

婪 lán 貪也 ...To **covet** is to say to be **greedy**.

In contrast to the previously discussed domain, only a small number of this domain's sound glosses (5 out of 27) share the same *Wahrnehmungszeiger*. On the other hand, the domain displays a high rate of sound glosses with the same *Bedeutungsträger* (30 percent). It is easy to see how surname could separate conceptually from birth, match make from deliberate, and attractive from draw to. Sound glosses of this type connect specific instantiations to more abstract notions as the entry "slave girls epitomizes the state of being destitute in the woman/wife domain" illustrates. Rather than to connect discrete terms or cognate families, Xu Shen's sound-based definitions of to seize a wife or of the groom's and bride's families look to derive the terms from their respective *Bedeutungsträger*s. Where in the cases of seizing a wife or the groom's family (to rely on) the derivation seems fairly warranted, the link between the designation for the bride's family and the tradition of taking the bride away in the evening requires a stretch of imagination, just like the sound gloss: "**Míng** is a beetle that eats grain shoots. When officials **covertly** transgress the law, the **míng** beetles crop up 螟 蟲食穀葉者吏冥冥犯法 卽生螟" in the following snake/insect domain. Most likely, the initial creation of graphs

like 婚 and 螟 took place by denoting the sound aspect through the rebus principle, with Xu Shen rationalizing what had originally been an arbitrary choice. Because of the ambivalent use of meaning extension vis-a-vis rebus principle as a basis for the *Bedeutungsträger* during the creative stage of the script, there are, however, no clear criteria for determining whether Xu Shen's sound based definitions represent the retracing or the creation of a sound derivation.

That sound glosses create rather than retrace a link is suggested by Xu Shen's gloss of the mother graph (𡗗 *mai* in ancient pronunciation, depicted through milk coming from woman's 𡗗 breasts). Across languages one of the first sounds -- inevitably starting in a labial consonant -- a child is able to produce will be associated with the primary caretaker. The name does not derive from the general notion of 'taking care,' which 'mother' shares with 'cow herd.' Incidentally, 'cow herd' is likely coined in a similar fashion, mimicking the sound of a cow. The pronunciation links two discrete terms, the connection leads to generalization, and generalization endows both terms with a common aspect. While the name for mother will be more or less the same across languages, the particular manner in which it is understood to refer to mother is unique to Han China. Through the link facilitated by its pronunciation, 'mother' stands for a more general notion than the one it immediately designates.

A similar (re-)baptizing of a term is detectable in Xu Shen's entries on 妻 and 婦. The fact that the two graphs are constituted as combined intentions rather than shape-and-sound precludes an attempt to locate sense through a *Bedeutungsträger*. Both terms refer to wife, 婦 accordingly featured in the gloss on 妻. In the manner *how* they denote this referent, however, the two contrast. Both the seal graph of 妻 with the 'rise up,' 'be in

charge' and the ancient graph with the 'to value highly' graphic components justify the sound link with 'to be level.' The 婦 graph's depiction of a hand grasping a broom, on the other hand, validates the term's connection to 'serve.' Sound gloss reinforces graphic explanation. 'Wife' can be named and depicted through parity or servitude.

The manner how 婦 names its actuality is irrelevant when the term is used to gloss the domain heading graph 'woman.' In this case the term is used in the sense of wife, just like husband is used to gloss man (男夫也 卷十三 男部). Even if these glosses do not rely on sound, they locate an aspect rather than link through referent. 'Husband' and 'wife' imply a counterpart. Man and woman, the two most complete manifestations of *qian* and *kun*, are glossed relationally. In the woman/wife domain this pairing connotation of the heading graph plays another role. After the first twelve graphs concerned with surnames and after a graph denoting a maid, the domain lists two terms for match making, two terms (gender specific) for getting married, two terms (gender specific) for the partner's family, two terms for wife, and two terms for the general notion of matching. The ten term cluster related to match and marriage is listed prominently near the start of the domain and easily displays the highest concentration (90 percent) of sound glosses in the *Shuowen*. Rather than a derivation, sound gloss is the matching of suitable linguistic partners, the bringing together of distinct word lineages.

Of these the term 妃 (to match) deserves detailed treatment. In its variant form 配 the term appears in the following passage of the Commentary:

夫易 ... 廣大配天地變通配四時陰陽之義配日月易簡之善配至德 (A6)

In broadness and magnitude the *Change* matches heaven and earth; in its aspect of connecting the flux the *Change* matches the four seasons; in the suitability of its yin-yang polarity the *Change* matches the sun and the moon; in the beneficence of its ease and simplicity the *Change* matches the utmost potency.

Willard Peterson bases his Commentary's "first major claim" on this term's usage:

In the word 配 *p'ei*, which I have translated as "matches," we have the closest the "Commentary" comes to the word "duplicates," which I have suggested as descriptive of the relationship which the "Commentary" seeks to persuade us exists between the *Change* and heaven-and-earth. The *Change* is not separate from but equal to the cosmos, and it is in virtue of that relationship that it "works." (Peterson, 1982, pp. 90-91)

The special relationship between *qian* and *kun*, or, husband and wife, is projected into the way in which the *Change* encapsulates cosmic processes. This aspect of matching characterizes both the woman/wife domain and the sound gloss phenomenon. Elsewhere, the Commentary describes the relationship between *Change* and the world as:

易與天地準故能彌綸天地之道仰以觀於天文俯以察於地理 ... 與天地相似故不違 ... 範圍天地之化而不過 (A4)

Because the *Change* is level with heaven and earth, it can trace their course, to discern heavenly patterns above, and examine the structures of the earth below. ... Because the *Change* is like heaven and earth, it never contravenes. ... Without exceeding the scope, the *Change* encompasses the transformations of heaven and earth.

The three terms used here suggest that to match is to be level, to be alike, to encompass. The *Zuo Commentary* (桓公二年) adds a further qualification: "A pleasing counterpart is called match. A detested counterpart is called enemy. 嘉耦曰妃怨耦曰仇" Both usages imply perfect parity, but differ in auspiciousness. To match, the principal connotation of the woman domain, is a positively charged term, useful for conceptualizing the relation between two converging terms as well as -- once Pao Xi's technique is extended by Xu Shen to the classical Chinese writing system -- between a linguistic term and its referent. "To liken," the Postscript's sound gloss of 'writing,' afterall, falls in the woman domain: "To liken is to follow your idea."⁵⁴ The graph combines the intentions of woman and mouth. 𠂔 从隨也从女从口"

⁵⁴ Feng Shengli, lecture at Harvard University, fall 2005.

The woman *Wahrnehmungszeiger*, however, may also denote inauspiciousness, as the long inventory of negative terms in the second part of the domain testifies. The three terms (瘡, 瘡, 瘡) related to covetousness (貪), linked through sound and listed side-by-side, constitute one representative cluster from the other pole of the feminine spectrum.


The name of the primordial female deity Wā (媯) is featured in the well-fortuned rather than the ill-fated section of the domain. Its sound gloss 'to transform (化)' neutralizes the potentially negative connotations that the name's pronunciation, related to 'disaster (禍)' -- in turn glossed through sound as 'harm (害)' and defined as 'absence of spirit assistance (神不福也)' -- may carry. The sound gloss also links the Divine Woman, and with her the whole domain, to earth. For where heaven fluctuates (天變), earth transforms (地化). While fluctuation facilitates connection,⁵⁵ an aspect of the way of heaven, changing from one thing to another entails differentiation, an aspect of the way of earth. Differentiation of a particular case from the general one also underlies the very existence of this sizeable (238 entries) woman cognitive domain, which understandably finds minimal correspondance in the miniscule (three entries) male domain.


To conclude on the same note as in the previous section, the one rhyming binome (委隨) appearing in this domain has the sense of winding, twisting. This, incidentally, is both the appearance and the connotation of the snake/insect domain, to which I next turn.


⁵⁵ 易窮則變變則通通則久是以自天祐之吉無不利 (B2) When change as modification exhausts itself, things begin to fluctuate. Once things fluctuate, they will connect. Once they connect, they will last. By these means entities obtain heavenly assistance: well-fortuned and advantageous in every respect.


The creepy-crawly domain




With 29 sound motivated entries (19 percent), this is a domain not only with the highest number of alliterative and rhyming binomes in the *Shuowen*, but also with a remarkable conceptual diversity in regard to included phenomena. I begin with the domain heading graph entry before moving onto its sound reliant glosses.


 huǐ 一名蝮博三寸首大如擘指象其臥形物之微細或行或毛或羸或介或鱗以虫爲象凡虫之屬皆从虫

Huǐ is another name for a viper. Its body is three palms long and its head is the size of a thumb. The graph depicts snake in a coiled, resting position. Minute entities whether they walk or fly, whether they have hair or wings, shell or scales, all use  for an image.


 téng 神蛇也 *Téng* is a numinous **snake**. (Based on the *Standard*, 釋魚, 16.38 騰騰蛇)


 míng 蟲食穀葉者吏冥冥犯法即生螟从虫从冥冥亦聲 *Míng* is a beetle that eats leaves of grain. When officials **covertly** transgress the law, the *míng* beetles crop up. (Contrast with the *Standard*, 釋蟲, 15.53, where the same beetle consumes the kernel of the grain: "食苗心螟食葉蟊食節賊食根蠹 注曰分別蟲啖食禾所在之名耳皆見詩.")


 jiéqū  蝎也 The *jiéqū* is a kind of scorpion. (Based on the *Standard* 15.6 蝎蝎 .


 dīngxīng 丁蛭負勞也 (Based on the *Standard* 15.24 蛭蛭負勞)




 qíuqí 蝤蛸也 The *qíuqí* is a kind of scorpion. (Based on the *Standard* 15.39 蝤蛸蝎)

 qícáo 蟻蟮也 (Based on the *Standard* 15.39 蟻蟮蟮)


 chǐhuò 尺蠖屈申蟲 Looper caterpillar contracts and extends. Duan Yucai: Walks as if using thumb and middle finger, thus the name. (Based on the *Standard* 15.43 蠖尺蠖)


 dāngnáng 蟪蛄不過也 (Based on the *Standard* 15.15 不過蟪蛄其子蛄)


 tángláng 堂螂也 (Based on the *Standard* 15.23 莫貊蟪蛄)


 guǒluǒ  蒲盧細要土蠱也天地之性細要純雄無子詩曰螟  有子  負之


 mínglíng 螟  sāng 桑蟲也 Mínglíng is a mulberry insect.


 jiádié 蛺蝶也 Butterfly.

 bānmáo 蜚蠊毒蟲也 The bānmáo is a poisonous insect.

 yīwēi 蚘威委委委鼠婦也从虫伊省聲



 sōngxū 蜚蠊以股鳴者 The sōngxū sings with its bud. (Based on the *Standard* 15.21 蜚蠊 蜚蠊)

 qīnglíng 蜻蛉也 Dragonfly.


 mièměng 蔑蠊也 (Based on the *Standard* 15.49 蠊蠊蠊)


 xiāoxiāo 蠊蛸長股者



 wānshàn 宛蟪也 Coiled and twisted.

 yōuliú  yōuliú 蟠也 Coiling and twisting. Duan Yucai: Sima Xiangru's *Daren Fu* uses the term for the appearance of a dragon. Cross-referenced in the *Yupian* and *Guangyun*. (671)


 há má 蝦蟆也 Toad

 wǎngliǎng 蜎蜎山川之精物也淮南王說蜎蜎狀如三歲小兒赤黑色赤目長耳美髮从虫网聲國語曰木石之怪夔蜎蜎 The Wǎngliǎng is the quintessential creature of mountains and rivers. According to the *Huainanzi*: Wǎngliǎng has the size of a two-year old baby, reddish black color, red eyes, long ears, and gorgeous hair. ...

 biānfú 蝙蝠也服翼也 Bat. (Based on the *Standard*, 釋鳥, 17.53 蝙蝠也服翼)⁵⁶

 hóng 虹蜺也狀似虫(673) 从虫工聲明堂月令曰虹始見  hóng 籀文虹从申申電也 The shape of rainbow resembles snake ... (Based on the *Standard*, 釋天, 8.8.5 虹蜺虹也)

 dìdòng 蜺蜺虹也 Color arc. (Based on the *Standard*, 8.8.5 虹蜺虹也)

⁵⁶ 方言第八 蝙蝠邊福兩音自關而東謂之服翼或謂之飛鼠或謂之老鼠或謂之  fú 鼠自關而西秦隴之間謂之蝙蝠北燕謂之蟻[虫墨]職墨兩音

𧈧 zhīzhū 𧈧 龜蟲也 𧈧 或从虫 𧈧 或从虫 Spider.

Only the 螟 entry and the link between the two names for rainbow constitute a paronomastic gloss. The rest consists of binomial expressions, or, disyllabic words, half of which are based on the *Approaching Standard*. The five entries from *jiéqū* to *chīhuò* even follow the glossary's pecking order. I have not attempted to identify the precise referents. My point here is to show the degree to which sound-based reduplication carries wider cultural associations with indiscriminate movement, squirming in particular. The two terms (𧈧 and *yōuliú*) that refer to appearance (e.g. of dragon) rather than a specific creature denote twisting and coiling. Coupled with the similar examples 逶迤, 連邊, and 委隨 from the previous two domains, it is justified to argue that the creepy-crawly overtones of the caterpillar, scorpion, or spider are transferred onto sound-linked words in general: sound glosses have a set in motion, fluctuate, continue effect within the Han linguistic system, quite unlike definitions that pin down and contrast.

The sound-graph parallel

The *Shuowen* contains three sorts of evidence that support the idea that the perception of links and continuities within the sound of Han Chinese underlying linguistic convergence is projected into the realm of graphical structure, where it comes to play a parallel role. First is the flowing appearance of seal graphs vis-a-vis the angular clerical style. Second is the sequencing of domains through graphic similarity. Third is the formulaic use of the expression "same intended (同意)" in one type of graphic analysis. The projection from sound to shape not only allows one to draw attention to an

overlooked aspect of Xu Shen's graphic explanations, but also to cast light on the sound gloss phenomenon. For graphs visualize principles operating less tangibly in the sphere of sound.

I have discussed the curvilinear appearance of seal graphs, which matches the Commentary based bend and curve definition of the mimicking shape principle, in the previous chapter. I stated that the script's fluidity made it better suited not only for resembling real world phenomena, but also for intimating likeness between scriptural elements. One may add an observation here in regard to the fourth script form in use under the Qin, which was called 'insect style,' carrying over into the Wang Mang period as the sixth 'bird and bug style.' The names could have well been based on the snaky/flying looks of these forms, which corresponded with their placing on flags: the graphs on the flag flap in more than one way.

I have likewise illustrated the graphic similarity based ordering of domains at the start of the third chapter and will finish this chapter with another such graphic narrative. Typically, graphic similarity of adjacent domains is coupled with semantic connection, just like sound similarity of characters yoked in a converging gloss. Cases where domain sequence is based on purely formal or solely semantic criteria constitute an exception. Since an exception often reveals an insight about a rule, I address here the exceptions.

Formal only similarity

刀 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 (卷四)

𠂔 jiǎo 獸角也象形角與刀魚相似

The graph refers to and depicts an animal horn. It is similar to [the graphs] knife and fish.

Xu Shen notes graphic similarity between the top part of the horn (𠂔) graph, knife (𠂔) graph, and the top and middle part of the fish 𩺰 graph. The first observation motivates the placing of the horn domain in the vicinity of the knife domain. The presence of the two character domain of sharpness (𠂔) between the knife and horn domains suggests meaning similarity: knife and horn share the aspect of being pointed. What seemed a pure chance similarity is given a notional basis. The striking graphic similarity between horn and fish, on the other hand, is inconsequential. The fish domain is located far away in the composition and does not have any meaning connection to horn domain. The observation is valueable nevertheless for it highlights the manner in which Xu Shen looks at graphs. Resemblance in the sphere of graphical record, even if not accompanied by a corresponding link in the referential frame, is explicitly noted. A formal connection is created purely on the basis of seal graph similarity. While no semantic link is posited in the case of horn and fish, the perception of physical likeness opens the possibility of its being (re)discovered later.

𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 (卷五)

𠂔 jí 三合也从入一象三合之形 ... 讀若集

Jí refers to three things put together. The graph combines intentions of to enter and to make into one. It mimics the shape of three things put together. ... It reads like to gather.

𠂔 rù 內也象从入俱下也

Enter is related in meaning and pronunciation to inside. The graph mimics from above (outside) to disperse below (inside).

𪛗 *fǒu* 瓦器所以盛酒漿象形

An earthen jar for storing ale or sauce. Mimics the shape.

𪛗 *shǐ* 弓弩矢也从入象鏑栝羽之形 王筠句讀曰缶矢上半似入字故次入部後然皆全體象形字缶下不云从入此安得有 饒炯 部首訂 上象鏑中直象幹下象栝旁出象羽說解云从入者誤也 (Xu Fu and Song Wenmin, 2003, p. 148)

Arrow as in (cross)bow and arrow. The graph follows to enter and mimics the shape of tip, slit end (for string), and feathers. Wang Yun: The upper halves of the jar and arrow graphs resemble the enter graph, that is why these domains are placed after the enter domain. Both graphs entirely mimic shape. In the jar entry there is no word of following enter, why should it be mentioned here? Rao Jiong: The top mimics tip, the middle straight line mimics trunk, the bottom mimics slit end and feathers. The explanation as following enter is mistaken.

Wang Yun's and Rao Jiong's objection also holds for Xu Shen's analysis of the [A](#) graph. Xu Shen explains the graph in two different ways: as pointing an event/combining intentions it joins entering and making into one; as mimicking shape it depicts three sticks put together. Similarly, arrow, as a representation of an abstract idea, follows to enter, as mimicking shape follows tip, slit end, and feathers. The ambivalence of these two explanations matches that displayed in the analysis of several of the branches and stems (干支). In Wang Yun's opinion, the sequence of these domains is based on purely formal resemblance. Following Xu Shen, the chance resemblance between graphs allows for the perception of a common notion in distinct entities. This notion is then projected back into the graph, which is given an alternative abstract explanation. Graphic similarity roots a conceptual link between to gather and to enter, between to enter and arrow. Since, ultimately speaking, abstraction preceeds representation, physical likeness is an expression of an underlying conceptual link. Accordingly, pointing an event explanation in both cases comes before a mimicking shape one. In contrast to the above two instances, no semantic connection is posited in the case of a jar, graphic similarity accepted as a matter of pure chance. In the just discussed sequence of four terms, Xu Shen will stop at noting formal connection in one semblance and will go on to reinterpret initial chance

similarity as an expression of deeper link in two instances. The graphic link cues one onto the underlying structure (理).

The cases of fish and horn as well as enter and earthen jar are important, for they show superficial similarities do exist, not all resemblances are meaningful, the inherent ambivalence of likeness creating space for human interpretation. More examples of formal only transition include:

瓜 *guā* 瓠(337) 也象形 (卷七) **Gourd** is to say **squash**. Mimics shape.

𡩺 *mián* 交覆深屋也象形 To cross-cover a cavernous dwelling. Mimics shape.

𡩺 *xì* 袞袞有所俠藏也从乚上有一覆之 (卷十二) Carrier into which one sticks and stores things. Follows to hide, the horizontal line above denotes covering.

𡩺 *fāng* 受物之器象形... 讀若方 A utensil for depositing things. Mimics shape. Reads like square.

The first graph in the second example (𡩺) denotes by means of combining two abstract ideas, the second graph (𡩺) by mimicking shape, the semblance between the two is accidental. Nevertheless, there is a referential link between a carrier and a square basket, an accidental semblance is made meaningful.

𡩺 *jǐ* 中宮也象萬物辟藏𡩺形也 (卷十四) The middle palace. Mimics myriad entities coiling into hiding.

𡩺 *bā* 蟲也或曰食象蛇象形 注曰不言从己者取其形似而𡩺之非从己也 An insect. Another explanation states to swallow like a snake. Mimics the shape. Duan Yucai: The entry does not state "follows 己" because it grasps on formal only similarity and attaches the domain, there is no connection to the middle palace domain.

If in the above examples similarity was limited to graphic record, there is also a number of cases where graphic correspondance between domains (whether adjacent or not) is interpreted as reflecting real world similarity.

𡩺 *niǎo* 長尾禽總名也象形鳥之足似匕从匕 (卷四) Bird is the general designation for long tailed aviaries. Mimics the shape. Bird foot resembles a spatula (匕).

𡩺 *hū* 虎文也象形 (卷五) The patterns on tiger skin. Mimics shape.

𧇧 *hǔ* 山獸之君从虎足象人足象形 𧇧 古文虎 𧇧 亦古文虎 徐復宋文民 下爲文身及長尾之形與人足無涉(Xu Fu and Song Wenmin, 2003, p. 135)

The ruler of mountain species. Follows tiger patterns. Tiger paws resemble human feet. Mimics the shape. Xu Fu and Song Wenmin: The bottom part of the graph depicts a patterned body and long tail. It has nothing to do with human feet.

Once again Xu Shen's explanation spans abstract and concrete. The ancient script variants resemble deer 麋 (without the horns). As mimicking shape, the two ancient graphs depict feet at the bottom. In the seal graph, the upper part resembles/is the patterning, the bottom part the human 𧇧 graph. Rather than just mimicking shape, the seal graph categorizes tiger along with man and having a pattern (same with the preceeding patterned pottery 𧇧 domain). Xu Fu and Song Wenmin, interpreting the seal graph as a transformation of an oracle bone and bronze script form, object to such identification, overlooking the larger role it plays in qualifying the domain. Not only does tiger resemble man in the aspect of being a ruler (of mountain species), the semi-legendary white tiger, the first privileged entry in the domain, is endowed with mankind's quintessential quality:

𧇧 *yú* 驪虞白虎黑文尾長於身仁獸食自死之肉 The *zōuyú* is a white tiger with black patterns. Its tail is longer than body. It is a humane animal which only feeds on cadavers.

The conceptual link between tiger and man is supported by physical resemblance in paws (feet), reflected in the structure of the seal graph. Detecting formal links in spoken and written language as a source of conceptual relations is inspired by a similar way of perceiving real world phenomena.

履 *lǚ* 足所依也从尸从彳从夊舟象履形一曰尸聲 𧇧 古文从頁从足 (卷八)

Shoes is what the feet **rely on**. The graph combines intentions of crouching body, small step, and to drag. The 𧇧 graph mimics shoe shape. Another opinion explains the graph as potentially cognate with words pronounced as 尸.

舟 *zhōu* 船也 ... 剡木爲舟 ... 象形

Canoe is a dinghy. ... One carves out a tree trunk to make a canoe. ... Mimics the shape.

舫 *fāng* 併船也象兩舟省總頭形

Dinghies tied together make up a raft. Mimics the shape of two canoes (simplified) and the tying up of their prows.

𠂔 *rén* 仁人也古文奇字人也象形孔子曰凡在下故詘𠂔⁵⁷

Humane person. This is a strange ancient graph for man. Mimics the shape. The [apocryphal] Confucius states: The graph depicts the lower body, therefore it twists [like feet].

As part of the seal and ancient graphs for shoe, 舟 does not denote a canoe (concrete thing) but a canoe-like shape (an attribute). By virtue of this physical similarity, canoe follows shoe domain. Two canoes tied together make a raft. Chance similarity between raft and the strange ancient graph for man then brings the graphic narrative back to man, the unifying theme of the eighth scroll.


Meaning only domain transition

If domain sequences based on formal only resemblance, such as from 舫 to 𠂔 are sporadic, transitions occasioned by purely semantic connections, like those found in the *Standard*, *Dialects*, or *Explaining Names*, are even rarer. The general rule is to root classification in formal-plus-conceptual, rather than just conceptual, linkage. The obvious exceptions to this rule are the three domain sequences of numbers, stems, and branches, all ordered according to counting progression, featured at the very end of the *Shuowen*. While the primer's last graph 亥 is explicitly tied back to the first graph 一, the narrative rounding a circle, it also needs to be kept in mind that the six principles of writing, of

⁵⁷ Following Duan Yucan's *Yupian* based emendation. While the seal graph depicts both man's arms and feet, this strange graph depicts only bend feet. (404)

which the *Shuowen* is the most complete expression, are followed within the curriculum of six classical arts by the nine parts of mathematics. The numbers, stems, and branches lead off mathematical instruction. The logic underlying the closing sequences of the *Shuowen* belongs to a realm that succeeds it. The *Shuowen*'s form conscious verbal logic contrasts with quantitative reasoning. Looking from another angle, however, as the subordinate member of the last pair of arts, mathematics is the extension of language.

Elsewhere in the *Shuowen* meaning only domain transitions are not as systematic as these three ending sequences. Below are a few examples.

 *miàn* 顏前也从面象人面形凡面之屬皆从面 (卷九)

Below (in front of) brows is referred to as face. Follows head, mimics the shape of face.



tiǎn 面見也从面見見亦聲 Face in view. Combines face and see, see also denotes sound.



miǎn 不見也象壅蔽之形凡𠂔之屬皆从𠂔 Not see. Mimics the shape of covering up and concealing.

The transition from the face domain is facilitated by one of its members, the face in view graph, an antonym of the subsequent domain heading graph 'not see.' The passage from the 面 domain to the 𠂔 domain is underlined by similarity of pronunciation. Moreover, the 'not see' domain is a side note to the graphic narrative, which is next resumed with the face-linked head (𦣻) domain. This aspect of not developing the graphic narrative is a common feature of domains linked through meaning only.





zī 東楚名缶曰甗象形 (卷十二) In eastern Chu they call earthen jar *zī*. Mimics shape.





wǎ 土器已燒之總名象形 Earthenware is the general designation for baked clay vessels. Mimics shape.

There is minimal resemblance between the two graphs, the earthenware domain following by virtue of this part of the scroll being dedicated to various types of vessels.

Should one nevertheless perceive formal similarity, this would be occasioned by the domains being juxtaposed and having comparable referents. Just like chance formal link may eventually lead an interpreter to perceive meaning similarity, proximity of listing and reference may generate perception of formal likeness. Through chance similarity the earthenware domain transitions to the bow 𢇛 domain. Unlike in the preceding case, where semantic only transition introduced a side note, here the 𢇛 graph, deliberately left as the last vessel type, occasions transition to the bow domain, which in turn, through its cord 𢇛, ties in with a section dedicated to filaments and minute things 𢇛.

 *chǐ* 口斷骨也象口齒之形止聲  古文 (卷二) Teeth [grow from] the jaw bones into the mouth. The graph mimics the shape of mouth and teeth, and is pronounced like 止.

 *yá* 壯 (80) 齒也象上下相錯之形  古文 Molars are massive teeth. The graph mimics the shape of upper and lower [rows of molars] grinding against each other.

From the point of view of seal script, this domain transition is a classic case of reference only, with the teeth graph bearing no resemblance to the molars graph. Since the graphic narrative is resumed with the 𢇛 linked 𢇛, the molar domain also constitutes a side note. As one examines the Ancient Script variants, however, one notices an obvious graphic similarity. The Ancient Script variants are essential here for providing a formal basis to the transition. This is no accident. There are four explanations in the *Shuowen* that rely explicitly on Ancient Script. The purpose of all four is to link domains, as the following section illustrates.

Explain through ancient graph

革 *gé* 獸皮治去其毛革更之象古文革之形 𠂔 古文革从三十三十年爲一世而道更也白聲 (卷三) Animal hide with its hair removed, **turned-into-leather changed**. Mimics the ancient graph, which follows thirty. Thirty years constitutes a generation, after a generation the way **changes**. 白 denotes the sound.


Reading the seal graph as a transformation of an ancient graph allows Xu Shen to analyze it into two identifiable graphs: 𠂔, the *Bedeutungsträger*, occasions the transition from the preceding three domains that include this graph. Interpreting the rest as the ancient script rendering of the graph for thirty, a domain appearing earlier in the same third scroll, facilitates the explanation of the basic character meaning as "to occasion change." For 'generation,' synonymous with change, is the only other graph in the thirty domain, coloring its connotations.


Today such linking-based explanation arouses suspicion. Xu Hao 徐灝, seconded by Rao Jiong, Zhang Taiyan, Lin Yiguang 林義光, and Xu Fu and Song Wenmin, argues:

古文革从三十以下十五字疑後人妄增許於此字蓋未詳其形故但言象古文革之形竊古文蓋象獸皮之形上下頭尾二畫象四足中其體 I suspect that the fifteen graphs starting with "follows thirty" have been mistakenly added by later people. Xu Shen likely was not sure how to interpret the shape of this graph, so he just said "follows the ancient script shape." I think the ancient script mimics the shape of animal hide, above and below are the head and the tail, the two depictions on the sides represent the four feet, and the thing in the middle is the body.⁵⁸

Contemporary scholars interpret the graph as mimicking shape. That the fifteen graphs were likely not added by later people, as Xu Hao would have it, is attested by the fact that it conforms with the other instances of Xu Shen's arguing through ancient script:

⁵⁸ Xu Fu and Song Wenmin (2003) pp. 54-55. Duan Yucai proposes a different view: "凡字有依倣古文製爲小篆非許言之猝不得其於六書居何等者 (109) In general, characters rely on and imitate ancient script, in this way Small Seal was designed. This is not a kind of explanation Xu Shen came up with when he suddenly did not know where to place a graph or how to explain it through the six principles."

弟 *dì* 韋束之次弟也从古字之象  古文弟从古文韋省丿聲 (卷五) 象增繳纏繞有次第故引伸之爲次第又引伸之爲兄弟也 (Xu Fu and Song Wenmin, 2003, p. 163)

To be tied around in succession. Follows ancient graph, a reduced version of , and is potentially cognate with characters pronounced like 丿.


Xu Fu and Song Wenmin: It mimics a cord strapped around [a thing] in successive orderly loops, therefore it is extended to denote sequence as well as younger brother.

Xu Fu and Song Wenming explain the graph as mimicking shape; Xu Shen uses ancient script graph to link to the immediately preceding domain of 𦍋 and to the 𠂔 *Bedeutungsträger*.

𦍋 *mín* 眾萌也从古文之象 

People is to say multitudes **sprouting**. Mimics the shape of the ancient graph.

In this case the ancient script graph is not used to link graphically to a preceding domain, but to root a sound gloss. While the seal form is unsuggestive, the ancient graph justifies its pronunciation being tied to sprouting.

酉 *yǒu* 就也八月黍成可爲酎酒象古文酉之形  古文酉从卯卯爲春門萬物已出酉爲秋門萬物已入一閉門象也

Yǒu is to say **lasting**. In the eighth month broomcorn millet ripens and can be made into young **ale**. The seal graph mimics the ancient graph. The ancient graph follows *mǎo*. *Mǎo* denotes the gate of spring when the myriad entities completely emerge; *yǒu* denotes the gate of autumn when the myriad entities completely enter. The horizontal line in the graph symbolizes a closed door.

In three cases the ancient script variant is used to link graphically to preceding domains, in one case it is used to support a Han period sound connection. Conspicuously missing is a diachronic perspective, which one would expect given a form prior to Small Seal is being analyzed, or a pictographic point of view, favored by contemporary paleographers. Xu Shen's explanations through ancient graph neither give a graph history nor identify referent. They instead locate connections across one synchronic system of written language composed of originally diverse elements. In Xu Shen's hands, script relates.

Same intended 同意


The final piece of evidence for proving the parallel between sound and graphic shape consists in the usage of the 'same intended' formula. Where in the definition of convergence the expression relates two words with similar pronunciation (考老), in the body of Xu Shen's primer it invariably refers to a shared aspect of graphic structure. Paul Serruys, while noticing this later usage, discounts its value for drawing out the principle:

The term '*T'ung yi*' ... is used in [the *Shuowen*] in some of the explanatory texts of the graphs, and here clearly refers to some graphic aspect of the graphs. ... The stress here is on the common graphic element with a general indication to some similar semantic role in the graphic structure, but it does not point to a common etymon, as it is implied in the definition of [convergence]. The term [same intended] is consequently applied to a different level (graphic structure as against semantic connection based on phonetic similarity) and refers to two essentially different notions. (Serruys, 1957, p. 152)


Although the term indeed refers to two different notions, I contend that these two notions are underlied by the same principle. But let us first examine the various instances of the formula's application in graphic analysis. These can be divided into three types. In the first type, the formula identifies a situation where same graphic element is used in several characters in other than its standard meaning:

 *shàn* 吉也从誩从羊此與義美同意 (卷二 誩部)

Good is to say auspicious. ... Shares intention with 義 and 美.

 *měi* 甘也从羊从大羊在六畜主給膳也美與善同意 (卷四 羊部)

Beautiful is to say sweet. ... Among the six domestic animals sheep is the most beneficial. Shares intention with 善.

 *jì* 自急救也从羊省从包省从口口猶慎言也从羊羊與義善美同意 (卷九 苟部)

Jì is to say extremely self-composed. ... The mouth graphic element stands for being circumspect in words. ... Shares intention with 義, 善, and 美.

The meanings of the characters 義, 善, 美, and 苟 have nothing to do with sheep proper. The sheep graphic component is used in all these graphs with the intention of goodness. It is no accident that the manner in which 'sheep' may be extended into 'goodness' is explicitly stated only in the 美 entry, for this character alone of the four is listed in the cognitive domain of sheep. Notably towards its end, the specification of the manner of semantic extension expanding the core associations of the cognitive domain of sheep.



niè 議 臯也从水獻與法同意 (卷十一 水部)

To deliberate on a crime. ... Shares intention with 法 law.



fǎ ... 平之如水 (卷十 廌部)

['Law' graph contains the water component to indicate that] law is even like water [surface].

The special intention with which 'water' is used in these two graphs is also inscribed into the water graph proper with the paronomastic gloss: "water is related in pronunciation and meaning to standard, level 水準也."⁵⁹



guān 史事君也从宀从𠂔 猶眾也此與師同意 (卷十四 𠂔部)

Official is a **scribe** who **serves** a lord. ... In hillock being used in the sense of multitude, the graph shares intention with 師.




shī 二千五百人爲師从巾从𠂔 四巾眾意也 (卷六 巾部)

2,500 men make a regiment. Combines intentions of surround and hillock. Hillock enclosed on all four sides denotes the sense of multitude.

The 'official' (官) graph closes the hillock domain, with the sense of 'multitude' being an extension of the core meaning of hillock (just like 美 extended 羊). Where in the 'regiment' graph the sense of multitude is generated by the combination of two graphs (巾 and 𠂔), in the 'official' graph the hillock (𠂔) element is sufficient to denote this intention.


⁵⁹ Similarly, in *Explaining Names*, 釋天: "水準也準平物也"


 *bēn* 走也从夭賁省聲與走同意俱从夭 (卷十 夭部)

Bēn is to hurry up. ... It shares intention with hurry up (走), both follow 夭.


The 𧾷 graph depicts a human body with a bend head and in its core meaning designates twisted. 奔 closes its domain and extends the meaning of the domain graph to stretching one's head forward as one hurries up. With this same, extended intention the graph is used in 𧾷.


In the second type of the 'same intended' formula's application, an unusual graphic element is explained by its formal and functional similarity to another graphic element:

 *mǐ* 羊鳴也从羊象聲氣上出與牟同意 (卷四 羊部) *Mǐ* is the sound of a sheep crying. ... The [top graphic element] mimics the air of the sound rising. Shares intention with 牟.



 *móu* 牛鳴也从牛象其聲氣从口出 (卷二 牛部) *Móu* is the sound of a buffalo cry. ... The [top graphic element] mimics the air of the sound coming out of the mouth.


The intention of the two top graphic elements, even if their appearances differ, is the same: the exhalation of sound.


 *zhì* 礙不行也从夷引而止之也夷者如夷馬之鼻从此與牽同意 (卷四 夷部)
Obstructed, not able to move. Follows to spin, extend, and detain. To spin is like to tie around a horse muzzle. In this the graph shares intention with drag on.

 *qiān* 引前也从牛象引牛之縻也玄聲 (卷二 牛部) To drag on is to pull ahead. Follows buffalo, and mimics the cord by which the buffalo is pulled. Is pronounced like 玄.


The 𧾷 graphic element is used in the sense of a string by which an animal is pulled, not in the meaning of the 'to cover' (𧾷) domain graph (卷七).

 *xī* 乾肉也从殘肉日以晞之與俎同意  籀文从肉 (卷七 日部)
Xī is dried up meat. The graph follows sliced up meat, sun is used to dry it up. Its [top element] shares intention with 俎.


 *zù* 禮俎也从半肉在且上 (卷十四 且部)
Zù are the ritual fillet-mignons. The graph depicts cut up meat on a sacrificial altar.

The explanation relies on similarity of the top graphic component in the Large Seal ()

rendering of the graph 𡵓 with a graphic component in the Small Seal graph 𡵓.

 *duān* 物初生之題也上象生形下象其根也 (卷七 耑部)

Duān is the tip of a thing first born. The top part of the graph mimics the shape of growing, the bottom part mimics its roots.

 *jiǔ* 菜名 ... 象形在一之上一地也此與耑同意 (卷七 韭部)

Jiǔ is a name of a vegetable. It mimics its shape above 一. 一 is the earth surface. In this the graph shares an intention with 耑.

The horizontal stroke has several distinct connotations in the *Shuowen*. In the above two graphs it is explained as earth surface. I list the case in the second rather than first type (atypical use of standard graphic element) because there is no meaning connection between this horizontal stroke and the horizontal stroke in the 'one' and 'up' domains.

These are effectively different graphs that only happen to look the same.

The last example also exhibits a feature common to a number of character pairs linked by the 同意 formula: the graphs head adjacent, or nearly adjacent, domains.

Compare with 𠂔 *ěr* and 𠂔 *shuǎng* (adjacent domains, 卷三), 𠂔 *gōng* and 𠂔 *wū*


(adjacent domains, 卷五), 𠂔 *mǐn* and 𠂔 *dòu* (five domains apart, 卷五), 𠂔 *gāo* and 𠂔

cāng (three domains apart, 卷五), 𠂔 *suō* and 𠂔 *qiú* (adjacent domains, 卷八).

In the third type of the 'same intended' formula's application, the phrase indicates that graphic elements combine in analogous way:



 *chén* 早昧爽也从臼从辰辰時也辰亦聲  夕爲夙臼辰爲  皆同意 (卷三 晨部)


Chén is the morning bright light. Follows to grasp and the spring branch *chén*. *Chén* denotes time and pronunciation. To clutch dusk makes evening, to grasp stirring time makes bright morning. In the way these two complex graphs combine their constituents there is a shared intention.


 *sù* 早敬也从𠂔持事雖夕不休早敬者也 (卷七 夕部) *Sù* is decently early. Even if it is night, one continues to handle affairs without rest, that is the meaning of decently early.

辰 (morning) and 夕 (night) express a temporal aspect; 臼 and 𠂔 express grasping.

There is no similarity between any of the constituent graphic components, but there is an analogy in the manner in which components in the respective graphs combine.


 *xún* 繹理也从工从口从又从寸工口亂也又寸分理之彡聲此與  同意 ... (卷三 寸部)
Xún is to sort out. Follows carpenter square, mouth, right hand, and wrist point. Ruler and mouth combine for chaos, 又 and 寸 combine to differentiate it. 彡 indicates pronunciation.


In taking the combination of 工 and 口 for chaos, the graph shares intention with .

 *níng* 亂也从爻工交𠂔 (卷二 𠂔部)



Bedlam is chaos. The graph follows crisscrossing sticks, ruler, intersect, and two mouths.

Carpenter square is combined with one or two mouths to denote chaos. Since how such connotation is generated is far from obvious, analogy between the two graphs in which such combination appears is posited.

 *zhuó* 挹取也象形中有實與包同意 (卷十四 勺部) *Zhuó* is to scoop. The graph mimics the shape of having a thing inside. In this it shares intention with 包.

 *bāo* 象人褰妊巳在中象子未成形也 (卷九 包部) To embrace mimics the shape of a pregnant woman. The 巳 in the middle mimics an undeveloped embryo.

Both graphs combine intention to denote the idea of embracing something inside.

Let us now summarize the analysis of the same-intended formula usage. In the first type, one of the composite graphs related through the formula invariably appears in the domain designated by the simple graph whose intention is being examined. So 美 appears in the 羊 domain,  in the 水 domain, 官 in the  domain. In each case the particular intention with which this simple graph is used differs from the standard domain meaning. Since domain categorization in tangential cases cannot specify reference, a link is made instead to analogous usage of the simple graph in another composite graph. This second composite graph never appears in the same domain as the preceding one. Effectively, a

new cognitive category is created that spans the two graphs with the same intended simple graphic element. In the second type, a graphic element appearing in a graph that neither constitutes a domain nor has a pronunciation is linked to same or similar element used with the same intention in another graph. Often in this second type the two graphs will head adjacent cognitive domains. In the third type an unusual combination of simple graphs is explained through analogy with another case of combining intentions.

Common to the three types is that the formula refers to simple graphs, graphic elements, or their combination, never to the overall character meaning. These simple graphs also never serve as cognitive or sound classifiers. They present an interpretative challenge, which is not solved analytically by deducing the graph's function in a singular instance, but by relating the situation to another character in which the same or similar graphic element also appears. The same intended formula thus introduces another level of categorization. Finally, 'intention' is used in connection with a specific form. Unlike 'meaning,' which connects a term with its referent, 'intention' pays attention to *how* a particular form is used. The intention's being bounded with form is perhaps the strongest argument against Dai Zhen and Duan Yucai's synonym based interpretation of convergence. Sound is also a form. Characters that are said to have same intention must also have similar graphic or pronunciation aspect. The difference between graphic and sound convergence is that where graphs can be analyzed, and subsequently the part of a graph that shares intention with another graph identified, sound cannot be divided. The positing of sound convergence thus depends on the vague perception of initial or rhyme similarity.

While so far in this chapter I have focused on what convergence is, understanding what it is not is equally important. The part of exegesis not covered by convergence is serviced by the sixth principle of loan, or, extension, to which I now turn.

Loan, substitution, extension. To use A for B (以 A 爲 B)

Just as the formula 'same-intended' graphically illustrates Xu Shen's use of convergence, there is also a conjunction in the *Shuowen* that identifies extension:

凡言以爲者皆許君發明六書假借之法 (742) Wherever Xu Shen employs the formula 'to use for,' he is highlighting the method of extension.

I say "extension," but this translation is far from clear-cut. The more common, as well as literal, understanding of 假借 as phonetic loan is reflected in Xu Shen's glosses:



bì 辯論也古文以爲頗字 (卷三 言部) *Bì* is to argue, to debate. Ancient script uses the graph for the character "**tilted, slanted** [head]."



qiān 堅也 ... 讀若鏗鏘之鏗古文以爲賢字 (卷三 廌部) *Qiān* is related in meaning and pronunciation to hard [soil]. It is read like *kēng* in the ringing, clanging sound *kēngqiāng*. Ancient script uses the graph for the character "**worthy, talented**."



gē 聲也 ... 古文以爲調字 (卷五 可部)

Gē is a sound. ... Ancient script uses the graph for the character "**to sing**."



kǎo 气欲舒出乃上礙於一也𠂔古文以爲亏字又以爲巧字 (卷五 丂部)

Kǎo [graph depicts] air wanting to be drawn out but obstructed by 一. Ancient script uses the graph for the connecting particle "from ... toward,"⁶⁰ as well as for the character "**skillful**."

All four glosses pertain to Ancient Script loan usage.⁶¹ In each case a particular graph is used for a graph with which it shares the phonetic; in fact, in three out of these

⁶⁰ 凡言於皆自此之彼之詞 (204)

⁶¹ 凡言古文以爲者皆言古文之假借也 (118)

four cases it actually is the phonetic. Duan Yucai describes the general practice of phonetic loans:

凡古語詞皆取諸字音不取字本義皆假借之法也 (650)

Whenever ancient words grasp only the sound of a character without taking up the character's basic meaning, they underscore the method of loan usage.

Both Xu Shen and Duan Yucai employ types of analysis here inconsistent with Ancient Script. As for Xu Shen, the distinction between the place holder graph (B) and substituted graph (A) may only exist in Small Seal, in Ancient Script both notions are denoted by same graph. As for Duan Yucai, the idea of basic character meaning (字本義) only emerges with Han character primers and is fully developed by Xu Shen. While loans are typically understood as instantiations of a purely phonetic use of script, Xu Shen's above examples do not necessarily conform to such principle. For in the first three instances meaning connection may also exist between the place holder and substitute graph: between to dispute and to tilt, between firmness and ability, between sound and song. In the last example, the use of 丂 *kǎo* in place of 弓 *yú*, i.e., of a character with which it has no sound connection, highlights the possible graphic, rather than phonetic, basis of loan usage. Duan Yucai comments on this far less frequent phenomenon:

假借多取諸同音亦有不必同音者如用 𠂔 爲澤用 丂 爲弓用 屮 爲艸之類 (499)

Loan usage mainly grasps on identity of pronunciation. But there are also cases that do not rely on sameness of pronunciation. Like the kind when luminous white (*gǎo*) is used for marsh (*zé*), obstructed breath (*kǎo*) is used for level breath/connecting particle from ... to (*yú*), or to sprout (*chè*) is used for grass (*cǎo*).

Examining the two examples added to the already mentioned one:

𠂔 *chè* 艸木初生也象 丨 出形有枝莖也古文或以爲艸字 (卷一 屮部)

Chè refers to the initial sprouting of grasses and trees. The graph depicts 丨 emerging with twigs and stalk. Ancient script also uses the graph for the grasses character.

𠂔 *gǎo* 大白澤也从大从白古文以爲澤字 (卷十 大部)

Gǎo is luminous white [lat. *candidus* as opposed to *albus*] marsh.⁶² The graph combines the intentions of immense and white. Ancient script uses the graph for the character marsh.

The loan usage of 𠂇 for 𠂇⁶³ is occasioned by graphic similarity and closeness of meaning (字形相似字義相近 203). 屮 is used for 艸 due to likeness of shape (因形近相借 21), and because the abstract idea of initial germination may be extended to the concrete referent 'grass.' As for 𣎵 used for 澤, Duan Yucai and Gui Fu agree⁶⁴ that 澤 is a corruption for 皋 *gāo*,⁶⁵ making this a straightforward phonetic loan. Thus in two (possibly three) entries, an ancient graph is connected with different pronunciations. This is like the seal graph 𠂇 that can be read differently as 'upward (read-like 𠂇)' or 'downward (read-like 退)' connecting motion, or the oracle bone graph 𠂇 that can be read either as 'to crack, to inquire,' or as 'omen cracks, to differentiate (兆).' The *Shuowen* examples of graphic loan may be few, but they point to a principle operating widely in earlier stages of the script, discussed by William Boltz under the designations "polyphony" and "homeosemy."⁶⁶ Homeosemy "is based on the premise that the depictive quality of the graph itself must suggest the second word just as it presumably suggests the first ... It must make semantic sense to use an established graph for a second word."⁶⁷ That is to say, there must be a meaning connection between the word for which the graph was originally intended and the word for which it also comes to be used. Where

⁶² Duan Yucai considers "marsh" a corruption, emending the entry to "luminously white 大白也." (499)

⁶³ 𠂇 *yú* 於也象气之舒𠂇从𠂇从一一者其气平之也 (卷五 于部)

⁶⁴ Duan Yucai (499); Gui Fu (1998) p. 891.

⁶⁵ 𣎵 *gāo* 气皋白之進也 (卷十 本部)

⁶⁶ Boltz (2003) pp. 102-6.

⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 102.


in standard loan usage the connection between two distinct words happens through sound, in graphic loan the link is made through shape. The shape of a graph behaves like the sound of a word: it never sheds meaning. Once again, there is a parallel between the use of sound and the use of graph.

Duan Yucai accounts for the wide currency of [phonetic] loan usage in ancient script:

皆因古時字少依聲託事 (21)

All these cases of ancient script loan usage are due to the fact that in ancient times characters were few in number, so by relying on sound an event was entrusted.

Even if Duan Yucai talks specifically about phonetic loan here, the same reasoning holds for graphic loan: with the difference that an event is entrusted by relying on shape rather than sound. If one accepts Duan Yucai's account, then what from the point of view of the more developed seal script appears as substitution (character A is substituted in place of character B because of sound/shape similarity and a meaning connection) originated as semantic extension: character A was used in other than its standard but, nevertheless, related sense. Moreover, Duan Yucai reckons there always exists a semantic center of character A from which meaning is extended to the more peripheral senses. While in the case of spoken word such semantic center may be difficult to ascertain, written characters facilitate its identification through their graphic component. The positing of a basic character meaning and the subsequent reliance on semantic extension to account for that character's occurrence in other contexts differentiates Xu Shen's approach to loan usage from other conceptualizations of the phenomenon, as evident in the following six entries:

 *fèng* 神鳥也 ... 朋古文鳳象形鳳飛群鳥從以萬數故以爲朋黨字 (卷四 鳥部)
*Pèng*⁶⁸ is a numinous bird. ... In the ancient script the graph mimics this bird's shape. When

⁶⁸ There was no labiodental sound in ancient Chinese.

the *Pèng* bird flies, all the other birds follow, numbering ten thousand. Therefore it is used for the character 'companion' as in 'a clique [of companions].'

烏 *wū* 孝鳥也象形孔子曰烏弓(157)呼也取其助氣故以爲烏呼 (卷四 鳥部)

Crow is the filial bird. The graph mimics its shape.⁶⁹ The [apocryphal] Confucius states: "The crow exhales evenly, [that is why it is named onomatopoeically as *wū*]." Grasping on the aspect of [the sound of the bird's name] aiding exhalation, it is used to prop the sound of exclamation.

來 *lái* 周所受瑞麥來麴 ... 象芒束之形天所來也故爲行來之來 (卷五 來部)

Láimóu, or, barley, is the auspicious **wheat-like**⁷⁰ grain received by the Zhou people. The graph mimics the shape of a bearded thorn. Heaven made it come, therefore it is used for 'to come' as in 'come and go.'

韋 *wéi* 相背也从舛口聲獸皮之韋可以束枉戾相韋背故借以爲皮韋 (卷五 韋部)

Wéi is to stand back to back. The character falls in the cognitive domain of lean on one another and is potentially cognate with words pronounced like surround. The coiling of animal skin allows it to be tied around things so as to alter their form,⁷¹ that is why it is borrowed for 'hide.'

西 *xī* 鳥在巢上象形日在西方而鳥棲故因以爲東西之西 (卷十二 西部)

The graph 西 mimics the shape of a bird nesting. Birds perch when the sun reaches west, therefore it is used for "west" as in east-west.

它 *tā* 虫也从虫而長象冤曲垂尾形上古艸居患它故相問無它乎 (卷十三 它部)

A serpent is a snake. Follows snake but is longer. Mimics the coiling shape and a hanging down tail. In early antiquity people lived in grass and feared serpents, so they would ask each other "He/the serpent is not there, right?" [This is how "serpent" was extended into the third person pronoun.]⁷²

Xu Shen's above rationalizations strike readers as too fanciful to be true. But it is precisely in places like these, where Xu Shen's argumentation contradicts conventional wisdom, that one gets the clearest glimpse of the unique aspects of Xu Shen's vision of

⁶⁹ Because of the crow's blackness, its pupils become hard to spot, that is how the crow graph (烏) is differentiated from the more general bird graph (鳥). (157)

⁷⁰ 來 and 麥 are actually variations of the same character, 麥 used in the basic meaning of 來 once its extended meaning took over.

⁷¹ Following Duan Yucai's emendation and rationalization. (234)

⁷² Even if this last case does not include the explicit "use for" formula, it displays the same type of reasoning.

linguistic arts. Let us first examine an alternative, perhaps more common sense

conceptualization of loan usage put forth by Zhu Junsheng:

轉注者體不改造引意相受令長是也假借者本無其意依聲託字朋來是也 (Zhu Junsheng, 1937, p. 44) A situation when a new character is not fashioned but instead the intention of an existing character is extended, so that its initial and extended senses are contingent on one another is termed divergence/extension. 'To command' extended into the sense of 'Regional Commander' and 'to stretch far' extended into the sense of 'District Chief' exemplify the case. A situation when, regardless of its intention, a character is entrusted through pronunciation is termed phonetic loan. The graph for the bird Pèng used in the meaning of 'friend' and the graph for the *lái* type of grain used in the meaning of 'to come' exemplify the case.

Just as Xu Kai's theory of the three harnesses dictates, Zhu Junsheng defines phonetic loan in dependence on the other member of the final pair.⁷³ Although Zhu Junsheng also uses friend (朋) and to come (來), terms linked by Xu Shen with the 假借 formula 以爲, to exemplify loan usage, he does so to deliberately challenge Xu Shen. For where Xu Shen sees 'friend' and 'to come' as semantic extensions of 'bird Peng' and 'barley,' Zhu Junsheng perceives no such connections, construing the two cases as instantiations of the rebus principle. Thus, even if both scholars agree that 朋 and 來 are cases of 假借, they differ fundamentally in accounting for such usage. Zhu Junsheng's favoring of the rebus principle, however, does not mean he entirely disowns semantic extension, in fact, this is how Zhu Junsheng understands the fifth principle, even using 令 and 長, Xu Shen's prototypes of the sixth principle, to exemplify *zhuanzhu*.

Modern scholars tend to favor Zhu Junsheng's definition of loan usage. Zhu Junsheng's theory differentiates between, in regard to graphic form, arbitrary loan usage

⁷³ Zhu Junsheng's definitions of the final two principles build on a theory put forth by Dai Zhen's teacher Jiang Yong 江永, in response to whom Dai Zhen formulated his conception of convergence. Jiang Yong explains: "本義外輾轉引伸爲它義或變音或不變音皆爲轉注其無義而但借其音或相似之音則爲假借 To turn and extend beyond basic meaning, whether by changing or not changing sound, is called divergence. Borrowing the same or similar sound, without considering meaning, is loan." (與戴震書)

(sixth principle) and semantic extension (fifth principle).⁷⁴ Now, even in Xu Shen's account not all cases of loan usage can be explained as extensions, phonetic substitution also plays a role, particularly when it comes to read-like glosses. Nevertheless, phonetic substitution functions as a special case of meaning extension. Incidentally, as one peruses Xu Shen's quotations of earlier *Cang Jie* exegetes like Yang Xiong, Du Lin, or Jia Da⁷⁵ for an indication of how they might have influenced him in regard to method, the following entry, which highlights extension, provides a rare clue:

𧐇 yù 象之大者賈侍中說不害於物

Yù is a type of a large elephant. My teacher⁷⁶ Jia Da explains that it does not harm entities.

Jia Da's subtle point is elaborated by Duan Yucai:

⁷⁴ The degree to which Duan Yucai is also wedded to this dominant tradition is attested by the fact that he calls cases of arbitrary phonetic substitution "true loan 真假皆," while specifying semantic extension as "extension-based loan 引伸假借" or "transferring/diverging loan 轉移假借." Compare:

𠂔 *suō* 伐木聲从斤戶聲詩曰伐木所所 *Suō* is the sound of chopping wood. Falls in the cognitive domain of hatchet and is pronounced like 戶. The *Poems* state: "Chopping the wood *suōsuō*."乃此字之本義用爲處所者假借爲處字也 ... 用爲分別之詞者又從處所之義引伸之 ... 皆於本義無涉是真假皆 (717) This is the character's basic meaning. To use it for place-location is to substitute it for the 處 character. ... To use it as the differentiation particle is an extension of the place-location. Both these meanings have nothing to do with the character's basic meaning, thus constituting cases of true loan.

𨾏 *zhì* 鳥飛从高下至地也 The graph depicts a bird flying from high above alighting on the ground below. 凡云來至者皆於此義引伸假借 (584) All cases where this graph is used in the sense of reaching are extension based loans of this meaning.

𧐇 *qín* 走獸總名从厶象形今聲禽离兕頭相似 Creature is the generic term for walking animals. Falls in the cognitive domain of animal footprint, also mimics the shape. Is pronounced like 今. Creatures in general, the *chī* mountain beast, and the wild blue buffalo all have alike heads. 注曰釋鳥曰二足而羽謂之禽四足而毛謂之獸許不同者其字从厶厶爲獸迹鳥迹不云厶也然則倉頡造字之本意謂四足而走者明矣以名毛屬者名羽屬此乃稱謂之轉移假借爾雅自其轉移者言之許指造字本言之(739) "Explaining Birds" chapter of the *Standard* states: "Biped and feathered are called birds (*qín*), quadruped and hairy are called animals." Xu Shen differs from this *Standard* definition because the graph falls in the domain of animal footprint, and bird marks are not called footprints. This is how *Cang Jie*'s original intention of 𧐇 as referring to quadruped and walking becomes clear. To call feathered species by means of haired species is designated as transferring/diverging loan. The *Standard* explains the character through its diverging sense, Xu Shen explains the graph by pointing out how it was originally conceived. Even if Duan Yucai considers pure phonetic loan as the prototypical case of the sixth principle, unlike Zhu Junsheng, he regards semantic extension a special instance of this same principle.

⁷⁵ Collected and analyzed in Ma Zonghuo (1959).

⁷⁶ The relationship is implied by the fact that Jia Da is the only quoted scholar designated along with title.

侍中說豫象雖大而不害於物故寬大舒緩之義取此字 (459)

Jia Da means to say that although the *yù* elephant is large, it does not harm entities, therefore the meaning of lenient-and-composed is taken/derived from (related to) this character.

The standard meaning of 豫 is 'bulky; magnanimous.' Jia Da roots the character's basic meaning not just in its pronunciation (large, lenient), but also in its cognitive domain, and then explains how this basic meaning is extended into the more conventional sense. Xu Shen develops his teacher Jia Da's isolated lead into a general principle. By always considering the cognitive domain indicator as consequential, Xu Shen groups graphs according to referential categories. Within these referential categories, or, cognitive domains, characters are listed according to meaning proximity. In this way each graph is assigned a specific place within Xu Shen's system, facilitating in turn the notion of basic meaning. Each character may only have one basic meaning, all other usages are considered its extensions. The principle of extension guarantees the continuity of a character's semantic field. Basic meaning acts as the focal point of that field: it connects, or, pivots, all the other meanings. Xu Shen consequently aims to specify basic meanings. His disagreement with earlier exegetes does not necessarily lie in their not giving a plausible meaning, but in their meaning not being the basic meaning. Consider the cases:

𨾏 *píng* 𨾏也从畱并聲杜林以爲竹筥楊雄以爲蒲器讀若駢 (卷十二 畱部)

繒 *zēng* 帛也从糸曾聲楊雄以爲漢律祠宗 (卷十三 糸部)

𧈧 *cháo* 𧈧也讀若朝楊雄說𧈧蟲名杜林以爲朝旦非是从𧈧从旦 (卷十三 𧈧部)

𨾏 *wò* 𨾏柄也从斗𨾏聲楊雄杜林說皆以爲輶車輪幹 (卷十四 斗部)

亞 *yà* 醜也象人局背之形賈侍中說以爲次弟也 (卷十四 亞部)

Hunched is ugly. Mimics the shape of a warped back. Jia Da explains the character by taking it for 'sequence.'

As a general rule, Xu Shen lists an alternative explanation when it differs from his own. In the above examples, Yang Xiong, Du Lin, and even Jia Da give an extended meaning or a meaning based on pure phonetic loan usage, but not the basic meaning.

Hence Xu Shen's disagreement. Jia Da's explanation of the last character⁷⁷ shows that he did not at all times pursue the lead he had given with yù. The idea to always account for character shape and to search for the basic meaning, even if prefigured by character primers and Jia Da was only fully developed by Xu Shen. Centuries later, Duan Yucai would take the ability to differentiate between basic and extended meanings as the measure of philological competence:

兄 *xiōng* 長也从儿从口 (卷八 儿部) **Augment** is to say **grow**. Combines intentions of man and mouth. 注曰口之言無盡也故以儿口爲滋長之意 ... 兄之本義訓益許所謂長也許不云茲者許意言長則可咳長幼之義也引伸之則爾雅曰男子先生爲兄後生爲弟先生之年自多於後生者故以兄名之猶弟本義爲韋束之次弟以之名男子後生者也... 兄弟之字則依聲託事 ... 淺人謂兄之本義爲男子先生則主從倒置豈弟之本義爲男子後生乎世之言小學者知此而後可與言說文可與言經義 (405) The mouth utters words ceaselessly, thus the combination of man and mouth is taken for the intention of increasing. ... The basic meaning of *xiōng* is typically glossed as 'to increase.' Xu Shen prefers to gloss the term as 'grow' rather than 'multiply' because grow can incorporate the sense of 'older.' Extending this meaning, the *Standard* states: "Earlier born male is called elder brother (*xiōng*), later born is called younger brother (*dì*)." Because the earlier born has lived more years than the later born, he is named through augmentation. Similarly, the basic meaning of *dì* is "to be tied around in succession," the younger brother is named through this sense. The characters for older and younger brother entrust an event by relying on sound. ... People of shallow understanding who consider older brother to be the basic meaning have got it the wrong way around. How much more those who consider younger brother the basic meaning of *dì*. Scholars today going around expounding philology, as long as they get this point, they may explain the *Shuowen* and elucidate the meanings of the Classics.⁷⁸

There is a difference between 兄弟 or 令長 on the one hand, and the extended usages of *fēng*, *lái*, or *xī* on the other: where the later three graphs depict a specific shape, and this shape's concrete referent is extended into more abstract sense, 兄, 弟, 令, and 長 denote first an abstract idea, which is then extended into a more concrete sense. This is in accordance with Xu Shen's prioritizing of 'pointing an event' over 'mimicking the shape.'

⁷⁷ Based on the Commentary line: "言天下之至賾而不可亞也." (A8) (738)

⁷⁸ Duan Yucai goes on to single out Gu Yewang's *Yupian* as an example of failing to grasp basic character meaning: "顧希馮玉篇不知此則直云男子先生爲兄男子後生爲弟而已以兄弟二部次於男部女部聞觀其列部之次第可以知其不識字義" (405)

Just as mimicking the shape is the extension of the abstract event into a concrete domain, so the principle of extension channels the abstract sound-meaning to specific referents.⁷⁹ The formula 'to use for' may also serve to connect the abstract with the concrete and vice versa. The primacy of abstraction allows for the rationalization of some atypical cases of extension. Consider the following entry:

𤇗 *xūn* 火煙上出也从中从黑中黑熏黑也 (卷一 中部)

Xūn refers to fire and **smoke** rising up. The character combines the intentions of rising and black. Rising and black is to say roast black.

The domain graph 屮 *chè* is defined as the initial sprouting of vegetation. Ancient Script uses the graph for grass. The domain includes, apart from the heading graph, six graphs. The first five, 屮 𦰩 𦰪 𦰫 𦰬, all use 屮 in the sense of 'vegetation sprouting' or 'grass.' 𤇗, the last graph in the domain, uses the 屮 graphic element in the general sense of 'to rise.' From this abstract sense it is extended to the specific sense of flames rising.⁸⁰ The graph is included in the domain of sprouting, rather than in the domain of black, to stress this abstract sense. Sprouting refers to grasses and trees, but through abstraction the idea can be extended to other phenomena that exhibit the aspect of rising, such as flames. The graph is listed as the last in the domain, once again extending rather than instantiating the domain notion. If there is any such thing as simple instantiation: 屮 might be given particular explanation in the domain heading graph entry, but all the

⁷⁹ Its manifestation in a non-linguistic context is also illustrative for understanding extension. Consider the following deployment of the 'use for' formula in the grass (卷一) domain: "茅 *zhù* 艸也从艸予聲可以爲繩 *Zhù* is a grass. ... It can be used for making ropes. 蓍 *ruò* 蒲子可以爲平席 *Ruò* is young *pū* grass. It can be used for making flat mats. 蓍 *shī* 蒿屬生十歲百莖易以爲數 Yarrow is a kind of *hāo* grass. In ten years it has hundreds stalks. In *Change* divination [these stalks] are used for counting (i.e., casting a hexagram)." In each case a type of grass possesses a property that makes it suitable for a particular use. The formula 'use for' connects raw material and its refined product.

⁸⁰ Duan Yucai, while also specifying that this is a case of loan, accounts for this usage without the intermediary stage of abstract meaning: the graph depicts flames rising (象煙上出此於六書爲假借 22).

subsequent members of the domain add further shades of meaning to it. The domain notion is transformed as more (tangential) members are added to it. The principle of extension thus also ensures the continuity and extendibility of a cognitive domain.

Another type of the 'use for' formula is detectable in the following three entries:



𦍋 *zhé* 耳垂也从耳下垂象形春秋傳曰秦公子輒(591)者其耳下垂故以爲名 (卷十二 耳部)
Zhé refers to a dangling ear. The graph mimics the shape of a dangling ear. The *Zuo Commentary* states "The Qin prince was named *Zhé* because his ears were dangling."

姜 *jiāng* 神農居姜水以爲姓 (卷十二 女部)
Shen Nong resided near the *Jiāng* River, that is why he took it up for a surname.

子 *zǐ* 十一月陽氣動萬物滋人以爲偁 (卷十四 子部)
As for the *zǐ* earthly branch, in the eleventh lunar month the *yang* vapor begins to stir and the myriad entities **grow and prosper**, [that is why] people take this character for designation.

All three entries provide a justification for a person's name: Prince Zhe is named after his dangling ear, Shen Nong derives his surname from the name of a river, people commonly use *zǐ* in their appellation because they wish to grow and prosper. At first sight this usage of the formula resembles the 'therefore it is referred to 古謂之' conjunction associated with convergence. There is, however, a key difference: where the 'use for' formula indicates an extended use of one particular character, the 'therefore it is referred to' formula connects two different characters with similar pronunciation. There are two ways of explaining the difference: either one applies the principle of extension to distinct characters, making 祿 an extension of 𧇖, 笙 an extension of 生, or 鼓 an extension of 郭, or one regards the coming together of characters on the basis of sound similarity as rooted in an entirely separate premise. I favor the second scenario. Where the principle of extension traces the derivation of a peripheral notion from *one* core idea, the principle of convergence creates a connection between, or, pivots, *two* distinct terms. Philosophically speaking, extension begins in one and ends in two, convergence begins in two and ends

in one. The respective ordering of the two principles reflects a belief about the world. A particular conceptualization of the relationship between one and two (i.e., many) underlies the opening two domains of the *Shuowen*. Consider the following entry:

帝 dì 諦也王天下之號也从二束聲  古文帝古文諸上字皆从一篆文皆从二二古文上字  平 𠂔 𠂕 𠂖 𠂗 𠂘 𠂙 𠂚 𠂛 𠂜 𠂝 𠂞 𠂟 𠂠 𠂡 𠂢 𠂣 𠂤 𠂥 𠂦 𠂧 𠂨 𠂩 𠂪 𠂫 𠂬 𠂭 𠂮 𠂯 𠂰 𠂱 𠂲 𠂳 𠂴 𠂵 𠂶 𠂷 𠂸 𠂹 𠂺 𠂻 𠂼 𠂽 𠂾 𠂿 𠃀 𠃁 𠃂 𠃃 𠃄 𠃅 𠃆 𠃇 𠃈 𠃉 𠃊 𠃋 𠃌 𠃍 𠃎 𠃏 𠃐 𠃑 𠃒 𠃓 𠃔 𠃕 𠃖 𠃗 𠃘 𠃙 𠃚 𠃛 𠃜 𠃝 𠃞 𠃟 𠃠 𠃡 𠃢 𠃣 𠃤 𠃥 𠃦 𠃧 𠃨 𠃩 𠃪 𠃫 𠃬 𠃭 𠃮 𠃯 𠃰 𠃱 𠃲 𠃳 𠃴 𠃵 𠃶 𠃷 𠃸 𠃹 𠄀 𠄁 𠄂 𠄃 𠄄 𠄅 𠄆 𠄇 𠄈 𠄉 𠄊 𠄋 𠄌 𠄍 𠄎 𠄏 𠄐 𠄑 𠄒 𠄓 𠄔 𠄕 𠄖 𠄗 𠄘 𠄙 𠄚 𠄛 𠄜 𠄝 𠄞 𠄟 𠄠 𠄡 𠄢 𠄣 𠄤 𠄥 𠄦 𠄧 𠄨 𠄩 𠄪 𠄫 𠄬 𠄭 𠄮 𠄯 𠄰 𠄱 𠄲 𠄳 𠄴 𠄵 𠄶 𠄷 𠄸 𠄹 𠅀 𠅁 𠅂 𠅃 𠅄 𠅅 𠅆 𠅇 𠅈 𠅉 𠅊 𠅋 𠅌 𠅍 𠅎 𠅏 𠅐 𠅑 𠅒 𠅓 𠅔 𠅕 𠅖 𠅗 𠅘 𠅙 𠅚 𠅛 𠅜 𠅝 𠅞 𠅟 𠅠 𠅡 𠅢 𠅣 𠅤 𠅥 𠅦 𠅧 𠅨 𠅩 𠅪 𠅫 𠅬 𠅭 𠅮 𠅯 𠅰 𠅱 𠅲 𠅳 𠅴 𠅵 𠅶 𠅷 𠅸 𠅹 𠆀 𠆁 𠆂 𠆃 𠆄 𠆅 𠆆 𠆇 𠆈 𠆉 𠆊 𠆋 𠆌 𠆍 𠆎 𠆏 𠆐 𠆑 𠆒 𠆓 𠆔 𠆕 𠆖 𠆗 𠆘 𠆙 𠆚 𠆛 𠆜 𠆝 𠆞 𠆟 𠆠 𠆡 𠆢 𠆣 𠆤 𠆥 𠆦 𠆧 𠆨 𠆩 𠆪 𠆫 𠆬 𠆭 𠆮 𠆯 𠆰 𠆱 𠆲 𠆳 𠆴 𠆵 𠆶 𠆷 𠆸 𠆹 𠇀 𠇁 𠇂 𠇃 𠇄 𠇅 𠇆 𠇇 𠇈 𠇉 𠇊 𠇋 𠇌 𠇍 𠇎 𠇏 𠇐 𠇑 𠇒 𠇓 𠇔 𠇕 𠇖 𠇗 𠇘 𠇙 𠇚 𠇛 𠇜 𠇝 𠇞 𠇟 𠇠 𠇡 𠇢 𠇣 𠇤 𠇥 𠇦 𠇧 𠇨 𠇩 𠇪 𠇫 𠇬 𠇭 𠇮 𠇯 𠇰 𠇱 𠇲 𠇳 𠇴 𠇵 𠇶 𠇷 𠇸 𠇹 𠈀 𠈁 𠈂 𠈃 𠈄 𠈅 𠈆 𠈇 𠈈 𠈉 𠈊 𠈋 𠈌 𠈍 𠈎 𠈏 𠈐 𠈑 𠈒 𠈓 𠈔 𠈕 𠈖 𠈗 𠈘 𠈙 𠈚 𠈛 𠈜 𠈝 𠈞 𠈟 𠈠 𠈡 𠈢 𠈣 𠈤 𠈥 𠈦 𠈧 𠈨 𠈩 𠈪 𠈫 𠈬 𠈭 𠈮 𠈯 𠈰 𠈱 𠈲 𠈳 𠈴 𠈵 𠈶 𠈷 𠈸 𠈹 𠉀 𠉁 𠉂 𠉃 𠉄 𠉅 𠉆 𠉇 𠉈 𠉉 𠉊 𠉋 𠉌 𠉍 𠉎 𠉏 𠉐 𠉑 𠉒 𠉓 𠉔 𠉕 𠉖 𠉗 𠉘 𠉙 𠉚 𠉛 𠉜 𠉝 𠉞 𠉟 𠉠 𠉡 𠉢 𠉣 𠉤 𠉥 𠉦 𠉧 𠉨 𠉩 𠉪 𠉫 𠉬 𠉭 𠉮 𠉯 𠉰 𠉱 𠉲 𠉳 𠉴 𠉵 𠉶 𠉷 𠉸 𠉹 𠊀 𠊁 𠊂 𠊃 𠊄 𠊅 𠊆 𠊇 𠊈 𠊉 𠊊 𠊋 𠊌 𠊍 𠊎 𠊏 𠊐 𠊑 𠊒 𠊓 𠊔 𠊕 𠊖 𠊗 𠊘 𠊙 𠊚 𠊛 𠊜 𠊝 𠊞 𠊟 𠊠 𠊡 𠊢 𠊣 𠊤 𠊥 𠊦 𠊧 𠊨 𠊩 𠊪 𠊫 𠊬 𠊭 𠊮 𠊯 𠊰 𠊱 𠊲 𠊳 𠊴 𠊵 𠊶 𠊷 𠊸 𠊹 𠋀 𠋁 𠋂 𠋃 𠋄 𠋅 𠋆 𠋇 𠋈 𠋉 𠋊 𠋋 𠋌 𠋍 𠋎 𠋏 𠋐 𠋑 𠋒 𠋓 𠋔 𠋕 𠋖 𠋗 𠋘 𠋙 𠋚 𠋛 𠋜 𠋝 𠋞 𠋟 𠋠 𠋡 𠋢 𠋣 𠋤 𠋥 𠋦 𠋧 𠋨 𠋩 𠋪 𠋫 𠋬 𠋭 𠋮 𠋯 𠋰 𠋱 𠋲 𠋳 𠋴 𠋵 𠋶 𠋷 𠋸 𠋹 𠌀 𠌁 𠌂 𠌃 𠌄 𠌅 𠌆 𠌇 𠌈 𠌉 𠌊 𠌋 𠌌 𠌍 𠌎 𠌏 𠌐 𠌑 𠌒 𠌓 𠌔 𠌕 𠌖 𠌗 𠌘 𠌙 𠌚 𠌛 𠌜 𠌝 𠌞 𠌟 𠌠 𠌡 𠌢 𠌣 𠌤 𠌥 𠌦 𠌧 𠌨 𠌩 𠌪 𠌫 𠌬 𠌭 𠌮 𠌯 𠌰 𠌱 𠌲 𠌳 𠌴 𠌵 𠌶 𠌷 𠌸 𠌹 𠍀 𠍁 𠍂 𠍃 𠍄 𠍅 𠍆 𠍇 𠍈 𠍉 𠍊 𠍋 𠍌 𠍍 𠍎 𠍏 𠍐 𠍑 𠍒 𠍓 𠍔 𠍕 𠍖 𠍗 𠍘 𠍙 𠍚 𠍛 𠍜 𠍝 𠍞 𠍟 𠍠 𠍡 𠍢 𠍣 𠍤 𠍥 𠍦 𠍧 𠍨 𠍩 𠍪 𠍫 𠍬 𠍭 𠍮 𠍯 𠍰 𠍱 𠍲 𠍳 𠍴 𠍵 𠍶 𠍷 𠍸 𠍹 𠎀 𠎁 𠎂 𠎃 𠎄 𠎅 𠎆 𠎇 𠎈 𠎉 𠎊 𠎋 𠎌 𠎍 𠎎 𠎏 𠎐 𠎑 𠎒 𠎓 𠎔 𠎕 𠎖 𠎗 𠎘 𠎙 𠎚 𠎛 𠎜 𠎝 𠎞 𠎟 𠎠 𠎡 𠎢 𠎣 𠎤 𠎥 𠎦 𠎧 𠎨 𠎩 𠎪 𠎫 𠎬 𠎭 𠎮 𠎯 𠎰 𠎱 𠎲 𠎳 𠎴 𠎵 𠎶 𠎷 𠎸 𠎹 𠏀 𠏁 𠏂 𠏃 𠏄 𠏅 𠏆 𠏇 𠏈 𠏉 𠏊 𠏋 𠏌 𠏍 𠏎 𠏏 𠏐 𠏑 𠏒 𠏓 𠏔 𠏕 𠏖 𠏗 𠏘 𠏙 𠏚 𠏛 𠏜 𠏝 𠏞 𠏟 𠏠 𠏡 𠏢 𠏣 𠏤 𠏥 𠏦 𠏧 𠏨 𠏩 𠏪 𠏫 𠏬 𠏭 𠏮 𠏯 𠏰 𠏱 𠏲 𠏳 𠏴 𠏵 𠏶 𠏷 𠏸 𠏹 𠐀

God is to say **truth**. This is the designation of the ruler of the world. Falls in the cognitive domain of up and is pronounced like 東. In Ancient Script all graphs linked with up follow — [e.g., 𠂇 𠂆], in Seal Script these graphs follow 二. 二 is the Ancient Graph for up. Duan Yucai: Ancient Script takes the horizontal line for up. This is a case of extension.

In Ancient Script both 一 and 二 denote 'up,' the numerals one and two denoted by the graphs 弌 and 𠄎. Xu Shen's creation of the opening domain of 'one' is based on a distinction made in the Small Seal, which incorporates the 二 rather than the 一 variant into graphs linked with the notion of up. To a large extent, 'one' is an artificial domain, its members, notably 𠄎, can be interpreted as originally Ancient Graphs linked to 'up.' In Small Seal, on the other hand, 'one' pivots up and down. The existence of a pivot only makes sense in a world underlied by polarity. And, as the Commentary argues (貞夫一者也 B2), the role of pivoting the world, of making many into one, is reserved for man and his most cherished classical activity: authenticating (貞). Incidentally, the graph inspires Xu Shen's singular employment of the 'use for' formula:

貞 zhēn 卜問也从卜貝以爲贄一曰鼎省聲京房所說（卷三 卜部）

To authenticate is to inquire by cracking. The graph falls in the cognitive domain of cracking and uses 貝 for sacrificial offering. Jing Fang proposes another theory, according to which 貝 is the reduced phonetic 鼎.

Xu Shen does not specify whether he takes 貝 for a simplified form of 鼎 (sacrificial cauldron) or for a cowrie (貝). His lengthy entry on 鼎, which ends with the note that Large Seal script used 鼎 in place of 貞, suggests the first case. Large Seal maintains a

connection between the sacrificial cauldron and the act of authenticating. Jing Fang considers this connection to be based on sound, Xu Shen accentuates its graphic aspect: cauldron is used to prepare the meal offered to the spirits, 'sacrificial offering' being the extended sense of the vessel. Xu Shen prefers a graphic extension because of the definite sound associations of 貞, glossed in the Verdict wing as 正 (to correct). By explaining the character as combining intentions rather than as sound and shape, Xu Shen stresses its interrogative aspect. 貞 is a crucial term for understanding the practice of divination in ancient China. The debate surrounding this practice centers on whether divination entailed a command or a question to the spirits. While Shang oracle bones suggest the first possibility,⁸¹ the *Zuo Commentary* (桓公十一年) underscores the second: "One cracks to resolve a doubt. Without doubt, why would you crack? 卜以決疑不疑何卜" Whether one interprets the 貝 (鼎) component of the 貞 graph through phonetic or graphic extension is a matter of religious belief rather than of impartial linguistic science. Xu Shen follows the *Zuo* tradition.

Combining intentions

Xu Shen's gloss of 貞 falls in a category of interpretations that resort to the principle of combining intentions in a situation where shape-and-sound could as easily be applied. It is not beside the point to ask about the purpose of the combining intentions principle, as some scholars, notably Boodberg (1937), challenge its very existence: in Boodberg's view all characters seemingly formed on the basis of combining intentions

⁸¹ Discussed at length in Keightley (1978).

principle could be explained as containing a sound component. Leaving Boodberg's argument aside, let us think back to 武 (martial prowess), the classic case of combining intentions. The character is used along 怒 (fury) in the paronomastic gloss of 馬 (horse). It is sensible to suppose a meaning connection between fury and belligerent, the common sense connotation of martial prowess. In an influential lecture, John Austin argues:

[A] word never -- well, hardly ever -- shakes off its etymology and its formation. In spite of all changes in and extensions of and additions to its meanings, and indeed rather pervading and governing these, there will still persist the old idea. (Austin, 1955, p. 201)

The principle of combining intentions is the Chinese scribe's challenge to Austin's idea: a new graphic etymology is proposed to contest the deep-rooted phonetic one. If this is how characters 武 and 信⁸² came into existence, Xu Shen's choice of combining intentions' interpretation over a shape-and-sound one constitutes an application of this original idea to later exegesis: by resorting to combining intentions, an interpreter stresses semantic discontinuity; by choosing [reduced] shape-and-sound interpretation, an interpreter makes a link with the core idea inscribed in the sound of a word.

To summarize, while both types of analysis result in a character's being placed in a particular cognitive domain, the principle of shape-and-sound links a character through sound to a particular sound/meaning category, while the principle of combined intentions deliberately does not do so. Continuity and discontinuity are a matter of choice; their relative order, however, is important: continuity is the general, discontinuity the particular case. The various manners of positing continuity and discontinuity constitute a theme running through a sequence of domains in tenth to thirteenth scroll, to which I now turn.

⁸² 信 often appears in place of 伸 (to stretch out) as in 屈伸 (卷三 言部 信條 92), suggesting the word to be cognate with words pronounced like 申.

Similarity of body part animal domain transition

Transition of several animal domains is facilitated by shared graphic element reflective, in Xu Shen's interpretation, of real world similarity. So the 𪛗 (a type of hare) domain is situated between the 𪛖 (deer) and 𪛗 (hare) domains (卷十); the 𪛘 (snake) domain is followed by the 𪛙 (turtle) and 𪛚 (frog) domains (卷十三):

𪛖 *lù* 獸也象頭角四足之形鳥鹿足相似从匕 Deer is an animal. Mimics the shape of head, horns, and four feet. Deer and bird feet look alike, therefore the graph follows 匕 [as in 𪛗].

𪛗 *chuò* 獸也似兔青色而大象形頭與兔同足與鹿同 The *chuò* is an animal. Resembles hare, but has greenish color and is bigger. Mimics the shape. Its head is same with hare; its feet are same with deer.

𪛘 *tù* 獸名象踞後其尾形兔頭與𪛗頭同 Hare is an animal. Mimics the shape of squatting, with the tail in the back. Hare head is same as the *chuò*'s head.

𪛙 *tā* 虫也从虫而長象冤曲垂尾形 A serpent is a snake. Follows snake but is longer. Mimics the coiling shape and a hanging down tail.

𪛚 *guī* 舊也外骨內肉者也从它龜頭與它頭同天地之性廣肩無雄龜鼈之類以它為雄象足甲尾之形凡龜之屬皆从龜 **Turtle** is to say **old**. Outside there is bone, inside there is meat. Follows snake because turtle head is same as snake head. It is the species that unites heaven and earth, with broad shoulders. Turtles do not have males, so turtles and tortoises take a snake for a male. Mimics feet, carapace, and tailend.

𪛛 *měng* 𪛛鼃𪛛也从它象形𪛛頭與它頭同 The *měngwā* is a frog. Follows serpent, mimics the shape. Frog head is same with serpent head.

Two explanations are provided for why the turtle graph follows snake. One is based on similarity of appearance, the other on functional similarity. Duan Yucai, characteristically, separates the two explanations. It is equally possible to link them: the *Liezi* based legend according to which turtles (female) mate with snakes (male) suggests a linking of distinct species on the basis of physical similarity. The mating of snake and

turtle is Xu Shen's rare projection of linguistic convergence into the world. The model of convergence I propose in response to Duan Yucai's functional only interpretation is based on a similar type of form plus function resemblance. The likeness of their heads occasions the popular belief about the marriage of snake and turtle. While this particular case only has a place in mythology, many connections occasioned by sound similarity play formative roles in the Chinese culture: one only needs to think of the symbolic imagery in Chinese art, where particular plants come to stand for the qualities with which their name is homonymous.

Another body part transition, of fish 𩺰 and swallow 𩺰 tails, initiates the sequence of domains in scrolls eleven, twelve, and thirteen, with which I now close this chapter.

Open/close, match up/negate: the story of the twelfth scroll

By common sense, rather than graphic similarity, fish domain follows cloud and water domains (water domain is -- with 468 entries, about 5 percent of the total -- the largest in the *Shuowen*) in scroll eleven. The semblance is noted in the entry on fish:

𩺰 yú 水蟲也象形魚尾與燕尾相似凡魚之屬皆从魚

Fish is a water borne, wriggly species. Mimics the shape. Fish tail resembles swallow tail.

The graphic specification prevents the reader from interpreting the bottom element in the fish graph as fire 火, a nonsensical explanation in the context of a graph that depicts an aquatic species. This deceptive similarity between 'fire' and 'fish tail,' however, plays its role in the flow of Xu Shen's graphic narrative. For fire flashes in the preceding tenth scroll, eventually succeeded by the mind-heart domain, the physical organ of which is, by contemporary erudites' opinion, the storehouse of the fire process. Even if Xu Shen bases

his gloss of the mind-heart domain graph on the old-script version of the *Documents* 商書, which takes heart to accommodate the earth process instead, the prevailing view of the day allows Xu Shen to link mind and fire in a single scroll. Reliance on contemporaneous convention, namely on the currency of clerical script, underlies the visual link between the mind-heart and water *Wahrnehmungszeigers* (as in 情 and 河, for example), which provides for the transition between the tenth and eleventh scrolls. While the formal only similarities between heart and water, between branching tail and fire link scrolls ten and eleven on formal level, the opposition of fire and water connects them conceptually.

The aspect of having a look alike branching tail/fin reflected in the shared graphic element allows for another transition: from the fish domain to the swallow domain. The shift from a water borne to an air borne species recapitulates the story of the scroll eleven, which began with river flow and moved into the air with the rain and cloud domains. It also augurs the creature that follows the one character swallow domain, the dragon:

龍 鱗蟲之長能幽能明能細能巨能短能長春分而登天秋分而潛淵从肉飛之形童省聲
 Dragon is the foremost among the scaly squirming species. He can be dark or bright, tiny or huge, short or long; in mid-spring he rises into the sky, in mid-autumn he descends into the depths of waters. The graph follows the shapes of meat [and] flying, and is potentially cognate with words pronounced like 童.

The meat graphic element (肉) in the dragon graph provides another linkage: to the bear (熊) domain whose linguistic meaning carrier (炎省聲) occasioned the abrupt shift from mammal domains (horse, deer, hare, dog, mouse, bear) to fire in scroll ten. The general outline of the mammal plot in scroll ten is from large (horse) to small (mouse), with bear being the linking exception. Dragon, whose protean body closely resembles the snake, is another connecting link in the animal chain -- to reptiles, insects, etc., the last members of animal kingdom to be listed. The right part of the dragon graph, which bears

resemblance to the wings in the swallow graph, occasions transition to the inter-related domains of soaring/flying, parting/negation, flapping, and a regional (Qi, Lu) variation of the swallow domain:

𨾏 *fēi* 鳥翥也 The graph for flying depicts a bird soaring.

𨾏 *fēi* 違也从飛下𨾏取其相背 To **part** is to say to **oppose**. The graph follows soaring, with two bird wings hanging down,⁸³ and grasps on the aspect of being back to back.

𨾏 *xùn* 疾飛也从飛而羽不見 (end of scroll eleven) Flutter is to fly excitedly. The graph follows soaring, but the wings are no longer visible.

𨾏 *yǐ* 玄鳥也齊魯謂之乙取其鳴自呼象形 (start of scroll twelve) In Qi and Lu they call [yàn swallow] the dark bird, *yǐ*, because that is the sound this bird makes. The graph depicts its shape.

Swallow being named onomatopoetically is consistent with a practice documented in the *Classic of Mountains and Seas* 山海經, where many birds and mammals are claimed to have been named after the sound they produce (584). Duan Yucai also notes that the two names for swallow, 燕 and 𨾏, alliterate. The first graph depicts the whole bird with its various parts, the second graph just its flying aspect. The different depiction and pronunciation are accounted for through regional use. The link to Qi and Lu, the home of Confucius, is significant in regard to the two entries in the 𨾏 domain:

𨾏 *kǒng* 通也从乙从子乙請子之候鳥也乙至而得子嘉美之也古人名嘉字子孔

In synch is related in meaning and pronunciation to **connect**. The graph combines the intentions of swallow and child. Swallow is the noble bird linked with the asking for a child: when the swallow arrives, one may obtain an offspring. It is a propitious bird. In the past there was a man named Propitious, his style name was Zikǒng.

𨾏 *rǔ* 人及鳥生子曰乳獸曰產从孚从乙乙者玄鳥也明堂月令玄鳥至之日祠于高禘以請子故乳从乙請子必以乙至之日者乙春分來秋分去開生之候鳥帝少昊司分之官也

When people and birds produce offspring they are said to nurture them, other land borne species are said to rear them. The graph follows to care for and swallow. Swallow is the dark

⁸³ The explanation as hanging wings is made possible by the linking of 非 to 不, just three short domains down. The two characters are similar both in meaning and graphic appearance.

bird. The Bright Hall section of the Monthly Ordinances chapter [of the *Record of Rites*] states: "The day when the black bird arrives one prays through the high *méi* sacrifice in order to plead for a child." That is why the graph for nurture follows swallow. One can only plead for a child on the day when the swallow arrives. Swallow arrives in mid-spring and departs in mid-autumn, it is a noble bird that unlocks life. It is in charge of dividing the seasons on behalf of the Lord of Early Spring.

The notion of connecting, which opens the first gloss, carries auspicious connotations: it describes the situation of Prosperity 泰, when heaven and earth interact. The two combined intentions graphs are explained, on the basis of Monthly Ordinances, as the synchronizing of two events: the pleading for, or the birth of, a child and the spring arrival of the migratory swallow. The name, quoted from the *Zuo Commentary*, further accentuates auspiciousness: birth name (嘉 propitious) and style name (孔 in synch) are typically synonymous. Suppose this refers to Confucius's father, the son, then, reflecting commoners' practice, adopted the surname from father's style name. Since surname was the privilege of nobility, the *Zuo Commentary* argues for a plebeian origin of Confucius.

The auspicious domain of swallow is followed by the inauspicious domain of 𪛗, the transition facilitated both by this semantic/value opposition and graphic similarity:

𪛗 *fōu* 鳥飛上翔不下來也从一一猶天也象形

[The character commonly used in the sense of negation] depicts a bird soaring in circles, not descending back. The horizontal line on the top of the graph denotes heaven.

𪛗 *fōu* 不也从口从从不亦聲 Obstruction is to say negation/not coming back. Combines intentions of mouth and flying away. Fly away also denotes pronunciation/meaning.

The abstract idea of not returning, which underlies the basic meaning of the 不 negation particle, contrasts with the cluster of terms that surround 通: 遞通徙遄遷運遁 遜返還 change, connect, realign, move, shift, alter, transfer, evade, elude, return, come around. (卷二 辵部) The cluster unfolds from transformation to returning, a semantic range with which the notion of negation contrasts. 否 is used as the name of the

hexagram Obstruction, the situation opposed to Prosperity. Turning the above graph upside down and then locating graphic similarity occasions the transition to the following domain of alighting/reaching:

㇏ *zhì* 鳥飛从高下至地也从一一猶地也象形不上去而至下來也

The graph depicts a bird flying from high above alighting on the ground below. The horizontal line in the bottom denotes the earth. Negation is depicted as departing up high, reaching is depicted as coming down.

The bird graphic element, which in several variations figures in the above eight domains, provides a link to one more domain:

㇏ *xī* 鳥在巢上象形日在西方而鳥棲故因以爲東西之西 𠂔 西或从木妻 ㇏ 古文西 ㇏ 籀文西

The graph depicts a bird nesting. When the sun tips to the west, birds perch, that is why the graph is used for west. The character is alternatively denoted by the combination of a tree domain and 妻 pronunciation. It also has Ancient and Large Seal script variants.

If the top part of the nest graph occasions the link to the preceding abstract 'bird' domains,⁸⁴ its bottom part (and Ancient and Large Seal script variants) formally link with the next domain, a connection semantically fortified by the extended meaning of west:

㇏ *lǔ* 西方鹹地也从西省象鹽形安定有鹵縣東方謂之 𠂔 西方謂之鹵

Rock salt is found in the salty regions in the west. The graph contains a simplified version of the west graph. It also mimics the shape of [a container] with salt. In Anding there is the Lu county. In the east they refer to salt as sea salt, in the west as rock salt.

Xu Shen's graphic explanation balances between a semantic link and a purely formal link connecting the nest/west and rock salt domains. Graph variants appearing in excavated materials support the "mimicking a salt container" rationalization.⁸⁵ Xu Shen's semantic link interpretation is occasioned by the relative position of the graph in the composition and the idea that graphic similarity should be underlied by functional link. In other words, functional link is forged by the perception of formal similarity.

⁸⁴ The concrete wing and bird domains appear in scroll four.

⁸⁵ Xu Fu and Song Wenmin (2003) p. 348.

The twelfth scroll next abruptly turns to the connected domains of eave, door, and ear:

戶 *hù* 護也半門曰戶象形

Eave is to say **protect**. Half of door is referred to as eave. Mimics the shape.

門 *mén* 門聞也从二戶象形 注曰聞者謂外可聞於內內可聞於外 (587)

Door is to say **hear**. Mimics the shape of two eaves.

Duan Yucai: Outside may hear inside, inside may hear outside.

耳 *ěr* 主聽也象形

Ear is in charge of hearing. The graph mimics shape.

The transition from door to ear is occasioned by graphic and functional similarity: an ear not only looks like an eave of a door, it also serves the same role of connecting inside and outside, an aspect of the paronomastic gloss underlied by Duan Yucai. Moreover, the character for hearing (聞), part of the ear domain, uses door (門) as its *Bedeutungsträger*.

The entry on hearing is worth inspecting closer:

聞 *wén* 知聲也从耳門聲 𡗗 古文从昏 注曰往曰聽來曰聞大學曰心不在焉聽而不聞 (592)
To hear is to know sound. Falls in the cognitive domain of ear and is potentially cognate with characters pronounced like door. In ancient script is potentially cognate with characters pronounced like dusk. Duan Yucai: one listens to what goes [around outside], one hears what comes [inside]. The "Great Learning" [chapter of the *Classic of Rites*] states: "When the mind is not present, one listens but does not hear."

Once again, Duan Yucai emphasizes the inner-outer aspect of the hearing/door cognate pair. The quotation brings out the opening and closing dichotomy in another way: hearing may be selective, the mind decides whether to take in the sound or not. The alternative meaning carrier, dusk 昏, can be accounted for by Duan Yucai's observation on the listening (聽) entry: "Whatever reaches the eye is called seeing, like seeing the dawn or seeing a thing. Whatever does not reach the eye but reaches the ear is called listening. Like listening to the world, listening to affairs. 凡目所及者云視如視朝視事是也凡目不能而耳所及者云聽如聽天下聽事是也 (592)" Hearing can be linked to dusk

through analogy: when one does not see at dusk, one listens (pronounced like dusk).

Similar logic is observable in Xu Shen's explanation of the combined intentions in the character name (𦔻) as to call out (𦔻) in dark (𦔻).

There is one other term in the ear domain that merits careful investigation here:

聖 shèng 通也从耳呈聲 注曰聖从耳者謂其耳順風俗通曰聖者聲也言聞聲知情按聖聲字古相假借 (592) Sagely is related in meaning to connect. The character falls in the cognitive domain of ear and is potentially cognate with words pronounced like even, level. Duan Yucai notes: Sagely falling in the cognitive domain of hearing refers to ears complying. The [late Eastern Han work] *Comprehensive Meanings of Customs* says: "Sagely is pronounced like sound. That is to say, on hearing the sound, [the sage person] can tell the disposition." Duan Yucai settles the matter: the characters sagely and sound were used interchangeably in antiquity.

Sageliness is connected with the ability to discern sound, which can reveal the disposition of entities. The understanding of sound connections in a linguistic system is the hallmark of a sage. Thinkers in the Warring States and the Han discussed passionately the question of whether sages belonged to antiquity or whether one could still become a sage. The *Customs* statement, coupled with the Han practice of glossing through sound, adds yet another voice to this debate: the age of sages ends shortly after the fall of the Han with the disappearance of sound glosses. Modern scholars with thorough grasp of ancient phonology may be able to recognize the connections made in the remote past, they can emulate the sages, but they are not in a position to make new connections, as they no longer possess the [connecting] intuition of a native speaker in regard to ancient Chinese. Sageliness is a linguistic feel in a system that regards sound primarily as the source of connections, a feel that hinges on knowing when to discern and when not to discern a relation.

Following the ear domain, the narrative is resumed by the jaw and cheek domain (𦔻). To perceive the mimicking shape aspect, one must look at the graph sideways (593).

Apart from graphic similarity, the domains of ear and jaw are linked through adjacency in the referential frame: ears are close to cheek and jaw bones. Following this logic further, the narrative moves from jaw down to hand:

𢦏 *shǒu* 拳也象形 注曰今人舒之爲手卷之爲拳其實一也故以手與拳二篆互訓(593)
Hand is related to fist. The graph mimics the shape. Duan Yucai notes: People today refer to an opened palm as hand and to a rolled up palm and fingers as fist. The referent, however, is the same, that is why the hand and fist graphs explain each other.

Duan Yucai may allude to contemporary rather than ancient distinction, but he is onto an important point. One needs to account for why the hand domain does not appear in the third scroll along with its variants such as 𢦏, etc. The gloss provides a possible answer: where the various hand related domains in the third scroll carry the connotation of instrumentation, here the emphasis is on the aspect of opening and closing. Duan Yucai's rationalization that fist and hand are used for mutual explanation because they share a common referent is characteristic of his understanding of convergence. In contrast to Duan Yucai, I propose that, even if the two characters are not related through pronunciation, the function of their linkage is the same as in cases of paronomasia: hand is related to fist to highlight an attribute. The connection between fist and palm indicates *how* one should understand these two terms.

Graphic similarity with the hand seal graph provides transition to the back(bone) domain (𠂔 *guāi*). The subsequent woman domain is linked through Wang Yu's perception of similarity between the woman graph and the depiction of bending spine:

𡥉 *nǚ* ... 象形王育說 ... According to Wang Yu, the woman graph mimics shape.

This woman-wife domain unfolds from maternal surname (姓) followed by eleven surnames, typically of sage originated lines named after the place of the sage's birth (according to the Guliang tradition, sages are not fathered by humans). This ordering is in

line with the domain's location in the twelfth scroll, which opens with the surname of Confucius, has an unusual surname entry 𡈼 in the west domain (there are no other explicit surnames in the *Shuowen*), and shortly after the woman domain includes the 𡈼 domain, used in extended sense for paternal surname. Surname, in contrast to the individual name, provides lineage.

The extended meaning of the 𡈼 domain graph, along with its resemblance to the eave and ear graphs, motivates its location after the woman/wife domain, in the middle of five (𡈼 𡈼 𡈼 𡈼 𡈼) graphically related domains.⁸⁶ The closing particle 𡈼, part of the 𡈼 domain, further ties this cluster of domains with the themes of the twelfth chapter, both in its basic (female private parts 女陰) and extended (relational particle) senses.

The succeeding domains do not easily lend themselves to a narrative interpretation. One may only note the relation of some individual terms to the general plot: martial prowess (𡈼) is defined as halting the halberd; either (𡈼) is glossed paronomastically as to restrain; drawing a bow (𡈼) is likened by Duan Yucai to opening a door. Bowstring (𡈼), with the subdomain of to tie (𡈼) ends the twelfth scroll, its resemblance to a fine thread providing the link to the thirteenth scroll. Similarity between a thread 𡈼 and a caterpillar allows for the animal plot to resume with snake/insect 𡈼, turtle 𡈼, and frog 𡈼 domains. The two sides of the frog graph mimic a belly filled with eggs,⁸⁷ consequently the egg 𡈼 domain follows. Egg embodies the matching of yin and yang, the merging of

⁸⁶ The semblance between the 𡈼 and 𡈼 graphs occasions rival explanations of the 𡈼 graph in the sun domain (日 in scroll seven): Xu Shen explains the top part as standing for the reduced *Bedeutungsträger* 𡈼, alternative opinion as the 𡈼 *Bedeutungsträger* (likely understood as cognate with 懵懵無知兒 muddled/ignorant, an explanation of 民 proposed by Duan Yucai, 627).

⁸⁷ 卵未生則腹大 (680)

heaven and earth,⁸⁸ hence the egg domain is followed by the 'two' domain defined as "the number of earth. The graph pairs one." Two 二 and earth 土 initiate the closing sequence of domains.

Along with connection and the open close dichotomy highlighted above, another theme running through the twelfth scroll is negation. Virtually all negation particles and absence terms in the *Shuowen* appear in the just discussed sequence. To list them together:

𠂔 違也从飛下𠂔取其相背凡非之屬皆从非
 靡 披靡也从非麻聲
 𠂔 鳥飛上翔不下來也从一一猶天也象形凡不之屬皆从不
 𠂔 不也从口从丌亦聲
 𠂔 止之也从女有奸之者凡毋之屬皆从毋
 𠂔 橋也从丿从𠂔从韋省
 𠂔 匿也象𠂔曲隱蔽形凡𠂔之屬皆从𠂔讀若隱
 𠂔 逃也从入从𠂔凡亡之屬皆从亡
 𠂔 止也一曰亡也从亡从一
 𠂔 無亡也从亡無聲 奇字无通於元者王育說天屈西北爲無
 𠂔 細絲也象束絲之形凡糸之屬皆从糸讀若視⁸⁹

This emphasis of the twelfth scroll on negation contrasts with its opening domain of swallow, which had the auspicious term 孔 glossed as connection, and with the 'matching' woman domain. Connection and disconnection, opening and closing, smoothness and obstruction alternate in this scroll. In this way the two poles of the human agency based categorization process are accentuated: a connection is opened or closed, continuity is created or denied. For every sound gloss there is a range of sound glosses that have deliberately not been stated. Closing and negation tie up conceptually with the earth linked domains that follow. For, in contrast to the connecting function of the way of heaven, the role of the way of earth is to block. To block, just like to connect, is to create.

⁸⁸ 卵陰陽之合天地之集也 (680)

⁸⁹ I include the term here as Duan Yucai traces it paronomastically: "Fine thread is related in pronunciation and meaning to indistinguishable, indistinguishable is to say absent. 糸之言蔑蔑之言無" (643)

Chapter Six. Likeness

Exposing the sources behind his chosen manner of interpretation, the canonical *Change* exegete Wang Bi makes the following two interconnected statements:

'Verdict' brings the bulk of a situation to a common denominator and clarifies its ruling principle.¹
Should one bring the bulk of the *Qian* situation to a common denominator and express it, then all its constituents are dragon-like. Should one first differentiate the variables and place them, then each follows what is proper to it.²

Likewise inspired by the Verdict tradition of exegesis, in this essay I have attempted to identify and draw out a principle governing the compendium of Han philology *Shuowen Jiezi*. My motivation was twofold. First, to redress an imbalance in *Shuowen* scholarship, which has tended heavily toward the "differentiate first" mode of operation, scattering the subject into a maze of specialized fields. Second, to demonstrate the existence of a rigorous method capable of not only going beyond the analytical mindset, but also of infusing the latter with new life. That Xu Shen's work is an analytical tool par excellence has long been recognized.³ That its exceptional facility to differentiate is rooted in an underlying relational approach has been underemphasized.

By relational approach I mean convergence. In its narrow sense, the principle describes the coming together of two discrete words on the basis of sound and meaning similarity. As such it constitutes the first rule of Ancient Chinese grammar, motivates the peculiar evolution of Chinese script, and finds exegetical expression in the so-called sound gloss.

¹ 夫彖者何也統論一卦之體明其所由之主也 The opening line of the *Concise Guidelines to the Zhou Change* 周易略例 (Wang Bi, Lou Yulie, 1980, p. 591)

² 統而舉之乾體皆龍別而敍之各隨其義 (乾上九 文言注)

³ Hence the enduring popularity of Zheng Qiao's interpretation of Xu Shen's title.

Tracing the connections between the gradual build up of paronomastic explanations and the traditional concern with the rectification of names, Zhang Yiren notes two widespread misconceptions about the sound gloss:

Many scholars past and present think that glossing through sound is one way of explaining character meaning; the only difference between a sound gloss and a semantic gloss being the presence of sound connection. The imprecision associated with this opinion dates back to Zhang Yi's *Expanding Standard* and survives to modern day, ... notably in scholars like Duan Yucai.⁴

To remove such vagaries of understanding, Zhang Yiren proposes the distinction:

Generally speaking, explanations of word meanings, whether they use standard speech to explain dialect usage or whether they use current idiom to explain ancient language, all elucidate the 'what.' Sound glosses are different, they elucidate the 'why.'⁵

Rather than searching out a term's referent, a sound gloss inscribes a manner into a word. Scholars who recognize this part are in turn prone to mistake the practice for primitive etymology. To these Zhang Yiren responds:

The original purpose of sound glosses did by no means lie in tracing the source of a word, but instead, using sound gloss as a tool, an intention was entrusted and a new, tradition rooted idea propagated. Sound glosses shared this aspect with graphic explanations.⁶

Far from being an ancient equivalent of historical linguistics, the sound gloss, as well as the graphic explanation, was a versatile instrument in the hands of, Zhang Yiren observes, primarily those who acted as the guardians of the tradition spearheaded by Confucius. The sound gloss appeared at a particular moment in time and responded to a specific historical need. That need sprang from the prevailing view of the Warring States

⁴ 歷來學者，多認為聲訓是解釋字義的一種方法，與義訓的差別只在於聲訓的被釋與解釋兩部份有語音上的關係，而義訓沒有。這種觀念上的含糊從魏張揖的廣雅開始，一直沿下來。甚至到... 段玉裁。(Zhang Yiren, 1976, p. 1204)

⁵ 普通解說語義，無論以雅音釋方言或以今言釋古言，都是說的〈是什麼〉... 但是聲訓則不然。聲訓是說的〈為什麼〉。(Ibid. p. 1204)

⁶ 聲訓之原始，其作用原不在求源而在託意也！... 早期聲訓，其作用原不在探求語源，乃是以聲訓為手段，宣傳儒家的思想和形訓的情形正復相同。(Ibid. pp. 1220, 1221)

period in regard to language. Detecting its common features in philosophers as diverse as Zhuang Zi, Yang Zhu, and Xun Zi, Zhang Yiren quotes its explicit formulation:

Names have no inherent aptness: they name by convention. Once a convention is established through daily usage, that name is apt which conforms to the convention, and, on the contrary, that name is inappropriate which violates the convention. Names have no inherent actualities, actualities are denoted through convention. Once a convention is established through daily usage, such name corresponds to its actuality which conforms to convention. There are, however, names that are inherently good. Good names are straightforward and easy to figure out.⁷

There is no reason behind why names have the form they have or why they refer to their particular actualities. While this belief may be the polar opposite of Liu Xi's "in the way names relate to actualities, there is in each case a proper category," the seeds of the Latter Han view can be detected in the second part of Xun Zi's statement. For in differentiating good, easy to grasp names from designations that thwart quick conceptualization, Xun Zi saw space for, and in his own way pursued, a practice aimed at increasing the relative worth of names. Although one cannot recreate the words of a language, it is possible to negotiate the way words are perceived and, ultimately, understood.⁸ Having demonstrated the value of looking at the sound gloss phenomenon from the intellectual history perspective, Zhang Yiren concludes:

Names and actualities originally had nothing to do with each other, their relationship was purely a matter of later people's deliberation.⁹

While this is an improbably extreme position, which Zhang Yiren duly qualifies by noting the existence of a large number of onomatopoetic and derived words in Ancient

⁷ 名無固宜約之以命約定俗成謂之宜異於約則謂之不宜名無固實約之以命(實)約定俗成謂之實名名有固善徑易而不拂謂之善名 (荀子 正名篇第二十二 CHinese ANcient Texts)

⁸ Coming close to Otto Neurath's acceptance, chosen by Quine for inscription, that: "wie Schiffer sind wir, die ihr Schiff auf offener See umbauen müssen, ohne es jemals in einem Dock zerlegen und aus besten Bestandteilen neu errichten zu können." (Quine, 1960)

⁹ 名之與實，初不相干，它們的關係純粹出於後天的人為的安排。(Zhang Yiren, 1976, p. 1217)

Chinese, it is onto an important point. No one can return to the stage when words first emerged, if there ever was one. A culture may, however, reflect its link with the language of the past in various ways. The one epitomized by Xun Zi was acutely aware of the absence of a meaning connection in words. To a classical Chinese thinker, language did not make sense; if anything, it had to be made sense of.

It is against this backdrop that the tradition of character primers and the instruction in the arts of processing language and texts culminating in the *Shuowen* need to be seen. As for that making sense, at some point a decision was made not to differentiate by means of sound. Rather than as a target of analysis, the pronunciation of a word came to be regarded as a potential duct to another word. The utilization of that duct in turn depended on the intersubjective perception of similarity. The mind's tendency to take in the world in terms of semblance driven categories rather than discrete objects, the prerequisite of language, was redirected to rationalize the tool it had once conceived. Tied with this new round of language based categorization, but serving the reverse role of differentiating, was the parallel propensity to class words and phenomena according to, effectively, non-linguistic criteria, which I have, in want of better term, called cognitive domains. The peculiar way in which writing, the select means of communication between persons in position of authority, evolved in China during this period, came to reflect the dual mindset just described.

Moreover, deep in the tradition persisted what once was a religious belief in regard to the efficacy of the written sign.¹⁰ While the graph's capacity to symbolize reality directly was to a large extent sacrificed for the system building faculty to render words --

¹⁰ DuanYucai: "In general, when in explaining characters one does not grasp the underlying structure, the world will be harmed. 凡說文字不得其理者害必及於天下" (卷八 舟部 朕條 403)

the loss of the unmediated connection between the inscribed sign and its real world referent a key factor in the way individual graphs would eventually be reinterpreted -- the notion that writing was more than visible speech continued to inspire new tasks to which it was put. By the time of Han standardizations, which effectively halted the evolution of the script, writing was assigned three roles: to link to the intention of the ancient sages, to order the world, and to morally restrain. Writing was depicted as culminating a long line of sagely creations that began in Pao Xi's eight trigrams, the archetypal device through which a civilization maintained its link to the numinous, categorized the shifting dispositions of phenomena, and carried out its first act of codification. Xu Shen's addition of codification to the traditional pair of roles ascribed to the trigrams was an outgrowth of Han concerns about the legitimacy of centralized rule and its concomitant standardization. A far cry from sanctioning a random convention, the ideal script codification, in Xu Shen's view, was rooted in logical principles and reflected, or, effected the natural order of things. The manner in which the aspiring movers and shakers acquired the means by which they would edify the court and shower benefits on the populace was anathema to arbitrariness

No other notion played more central role in Xu Shen's campaign against the arbitrariness of sign than likeness. Writing was manifestation and likeness. As manifestation, script consisted of patterns that facilitated imitation and differentiation. As likeness, writing stood in a relationship to language and the world that was based on neither identity or difference. Invoking similarity entailed choice.¹¹ To liken was to follow; to follow was to take note of one another. In this aspect of reciprocity, or,

¹¹ Coblin (1983, p. 12) observes that while the pattern 讀如 is very common in Han commentaries, the pattern 讀若, which prevails in the *Shuowen*, is rather rare. In its literal sense 若 is to pick, or, pluck. Reading into this nuance of Xu Shen's terminology, I take his sound glosses to accentuate choice.

matching, writing resembled, or more properly speaking, extended the technique of *Change*. Last but not least, follow was close to comply. And compliance in turn was intertwined with the idea of structure.

Structure does not reflect an immaterial principle. It is a pattern of physical resemblances realizable by means of getting to the dispositions of phenomena.¹² Unlike nature, which inheres in the object, disposition shifts according to situation and reveals itself through contact with another object. Individual inclination unfolds from disposition.¹³ To comply with Heavenly Structure consists in discerning how things relate and in categorizing them accordingly. Categories, just like the non-discrete constituents that compose them, are not self-contained, hemmed in units, but look to open a connection outside. That connection is occasioned by similarity, and through similarity category carries out its vital function: to create continuity in a world that poses to the human mind as constituted of disparate entities.

While the world presents the mind with its own pattern of resemblances, its overwhelming diversity puts the discernment of underlying continuities beyond ordinary human capacity. Herein lies the indispensability of writing, for Xu Shen, a sagely creation which originated, and for a good time subsisted, in categorization. Because written language is more than an imperfect mirror of the world, it is capable of serving as a foundation for the twofold act of connecting and differentiating that reveals Heavenly

¹² 理也者情之不爽失也 (16)

¹³ Xu Shen's prioritizing of relational disposition 情 over individual inclination 性 (卷十 心部) reflects a common practice in ancient texts such as the *Huainanzi* of compounding the two charged terms as 情性 rather than 性情, as the later tradition would have it. It also constitutes an argument against the general validity of Graham's claim that: "the word *hsing* 性 is one of the few in Chinese philosophical terminology which has a very close English equivalent. It is commonly translated 'nature', and a Chinese thinker does in fact discuss the *hsing* of a man, of a horse, of water, in very much the same contexts in which we would talk of its nature." (Graham, 1986, p. 7)

Structure. That connections between linguistic elements may obtain to a certain extent independently of their real world referents, in other words, that a system of signs may be the source rather than the projection of an overarching structure, is likely the most overlooked aspect of Xu Shen's approach to language and writing.

I put language first because I see the idea of ordering classical vocabulary on the basis of graphic similarity as the outcrop of the popular (rather than just elite) practice of connecting through sound. Traditionally, pattern, or, image, was the font of differentiation; the means through which a sign suitably linked to the world. To interpret a sign primarily through its connection to other signs, and only then to proceed to its referent, was an original aspect of Xu Shen's composition. In being more about the *how* than about the *what*, the *Shuowen* rooted itself in the original purpose of reading signs, which, as part of the practice of divination, aimed at determining relative auspiciousness.¹⁴ To interpret an image was to know how it bode. Shades of meaning, which determined success and failure, were discernible through contrasts and connections. To group characters on the basis of their non-linguistic classifiers or to aid memorization by joining meanings into narrative were practices common in Han instructional primers. To make cognitive domain an absolute criterion, to systematically arrange that domain, and to turn graphic similarity between domains into a narrative thread were Xu Shen's innovations. They not only made a comprehensive word list easier to remember, but also turned a rudimentary teaching tool into a sophisticated expression of a continuity seeking philosophy.

The dual identity of the *Shuowen* as a practical primer and a systematic philosophy does not entail contradiction. On the contrary, it is precisely the work's clever yet simple

¹⁴ 讀籀書也 (卷三 言部) 籀讀書也... 春秋傳曰卜籀云 (卷五 竹部) 注曰毛傳曰讀抽也方言曰抽讀也抽皆籀之假借籀者抽也讀者續也春秋傳卜筮繇辭今皆作繇據許則作籀服虔曰繇抽也抽出吉凶也 (190)

organization through a network of physical resemblances that makes it such a feasible pedagogical tool. The prospect of so many potentially productive similarities, I would like to emphasize here, is opened by the decision to regard one particular incarnation of writing and speech as a synchronic system comprised of a limited number of linkable components. The 540 graphic, or, cognitive domains of course have their counterpart in more than double the number of sound, or, meaning categories (see appendix II). In the way these components connect, contrast, and combine, the texture of the classical Chinese mindset reveals itself. That the *Shuowen* is not routinely taught in introductory language or philosophy classes bespeaks the degree to which the present day sinologist and philosopher are still unwilling to surrender their culture's predictable certainties to the beauty of the unexpected.

Appendix I.

Xu Shen's postscript, facsimile of the Vermont manuscript

Undated, small seal on birch bark, two scrolls

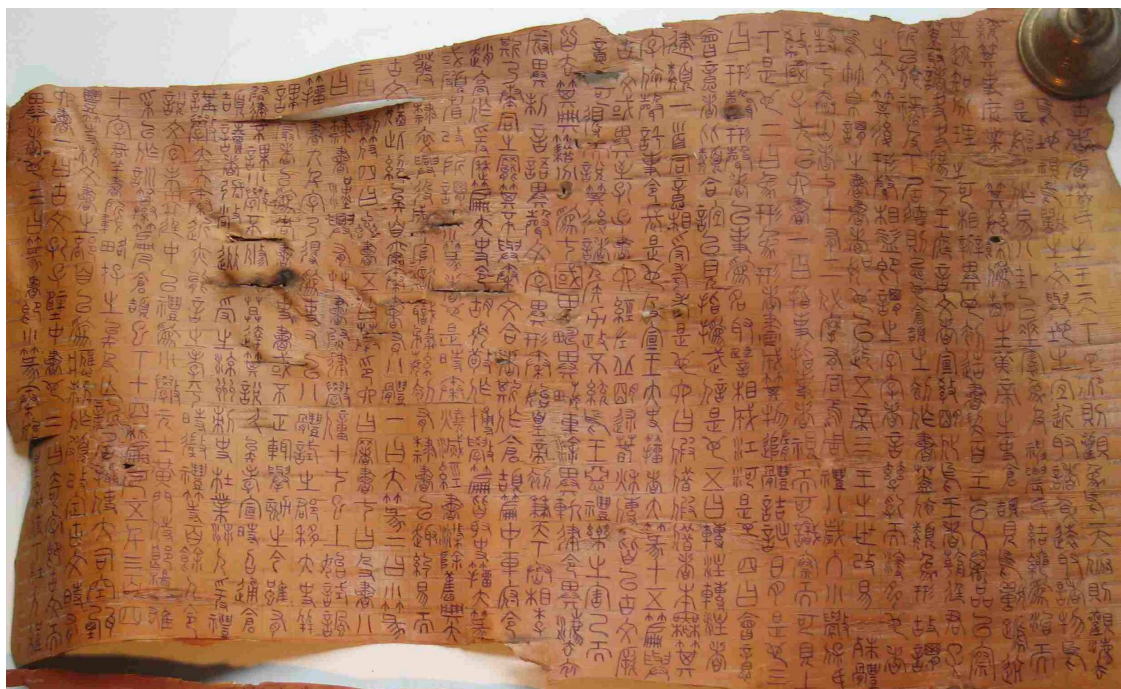


Fig. 5. First scroll of the Vermont manuscript.



Fig. 6. First part of the second scroll of the Vermont manuscript.

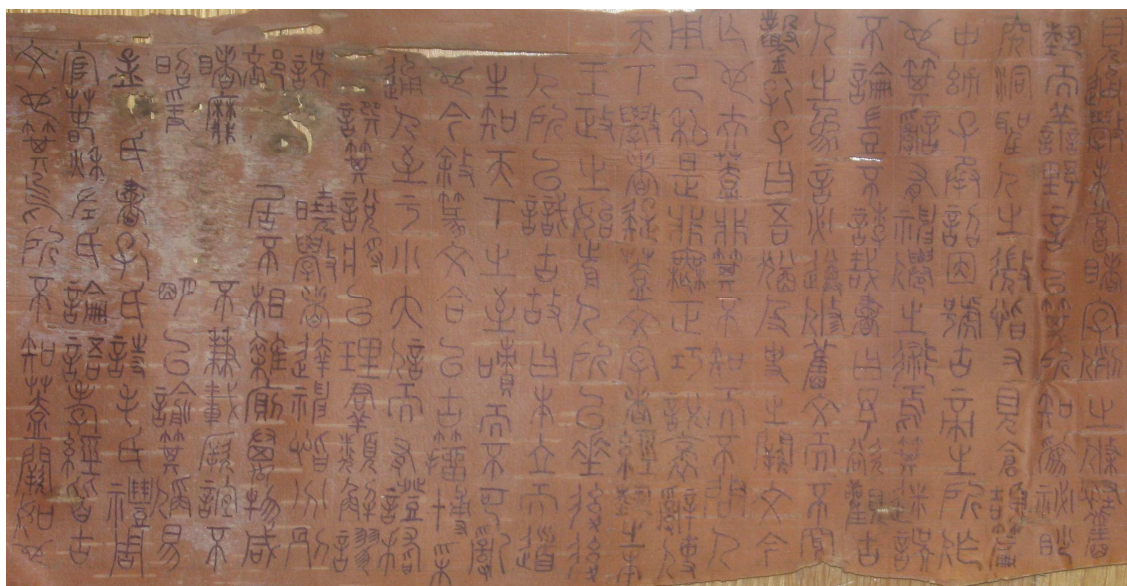
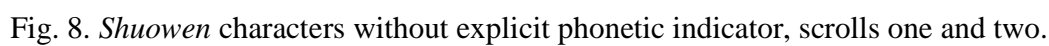


Fig. 7. Final part of the second scroll of the Vermont manuscript.

The *Shuowen* alphabet, with ancient initial and rhyme categories



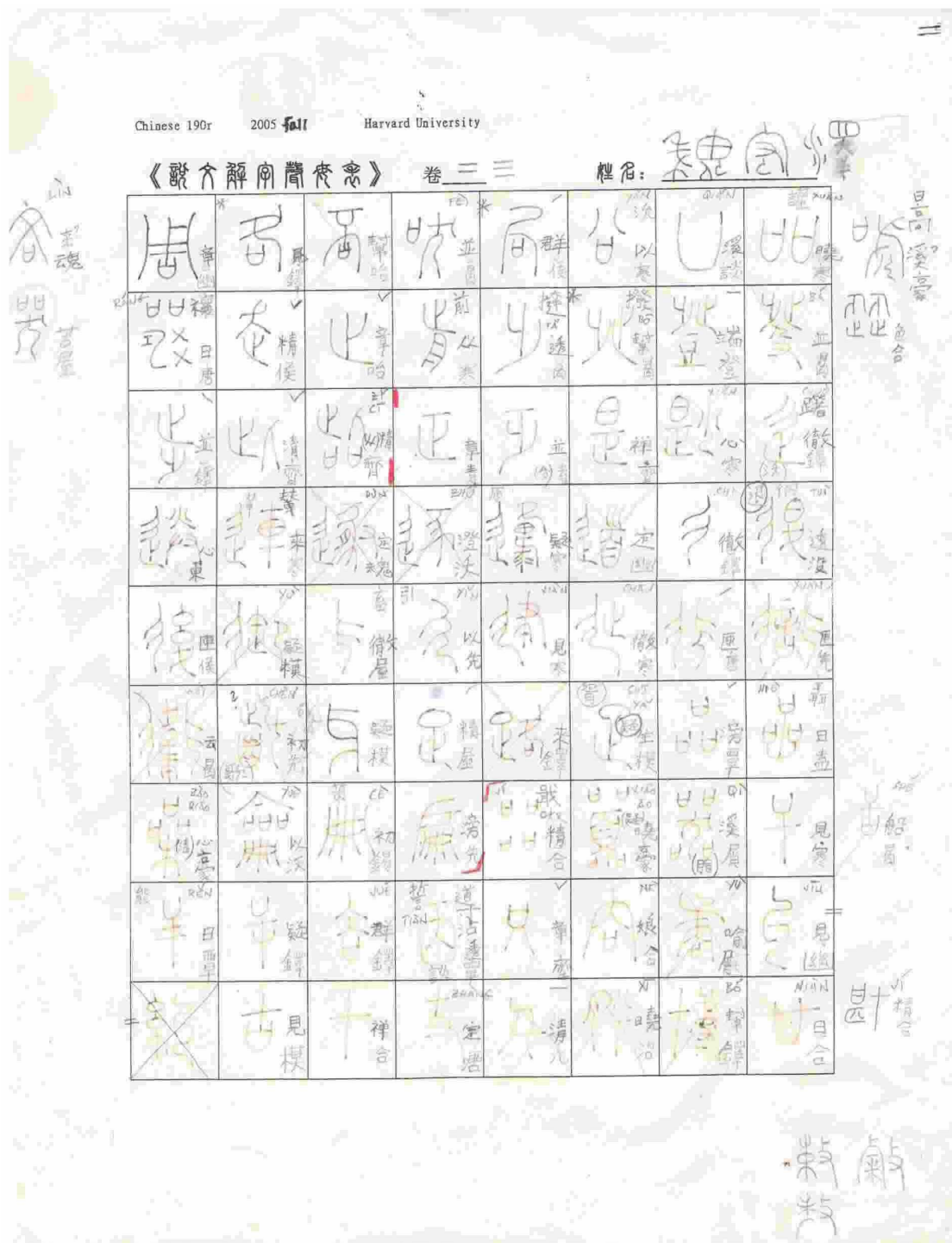






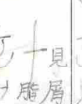






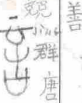


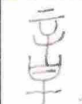












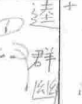









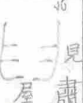


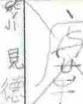




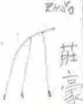





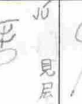




















Fig. 9. *Shuowen* characters without explicit phonetic indicator, scrolls two and three.

卷三

姓名:

羶肉 羶 羊

 <p>井 心合</p>	 <p>喜 介(僞) 影德</p>	 <p>德 書心先</p>	 <p>俞 俞豪</p>	 <p>衆 書見</p>	 <p>十 見屬</p>	 <p>心 心台</p>	 <p>三 書見</p>
 <p>泥 泥沿</p>	 <p>來 來豪</p>	 <p>匪 匪豪</p>	 <p>透 透幽</p>	 <p>群 群唐</p>	 <p>祥 祥寒</p>	 <p>人 群唐</p>	 <p>覃 覃寒</p>
 <p>草 草唐</p>	 <p>見 見唐</p>	 <p>辛 行心 愛寒</p>	 <p>清 清盍</p>	 <p>疑 疑盍</p>	 <p>崇 崇沐</p>	 <p>端 端盍</p>	 <p>東 東東</p>
 <p>禪 禪登</p>	 <p>曉 曉寒</p>	 <p>影 影談</p>	 <p>乘 乘東</p>	 <p>群 群幽</p>	 <p>見 見德</p>	 <p>幫 幫唐</p>	 <p>見 見侯</p>
 <p>清 清寒</p>	 <p>群 群東</p>	 <p>喻 喻德</p>	 <p>余 余以模</p>	 <p>喻 喻模</p>	 <p>曉 曉登</p>	 <p>見 見肅</p>	 <p>清 清寒</p>
 <p>群 群東</p>	 <p>見 見德</p>	 <p>匪 匪寒</p>	 <p>來 來錫</p>	 <p>見 見見</p>	 <p>見 見唐</p>	 <p>幫 幫豪</p>	 <p>並 並錫</p>
 <p>見 見歌</p>	 <p>見 見章</p>	 <p>見 見見</p>	 <p>見 見見</p>	 <p>見 見見</p>	 <p>見 見見</p>	 <p>見 見見</p>	 <p>見 見見</p>
 <p>見 見歌</p>	 <p>見 見章</p>	 <p>見 見見</p>	 <p>見 見見</p>	 <p>見 見見</p>	 <p>見 見見</p>	 <p>見 見見</p>	 <p>見 見見</p>
 <p>見 見歌</p>	 <p>見 見章</p>	 <p>見 見見</p>	 <p>見 見見</p>	 <p>見 見見</p>	 <p>見 見見</p>	 <p>見 見見</p>	 <p>見 見見</p>

250

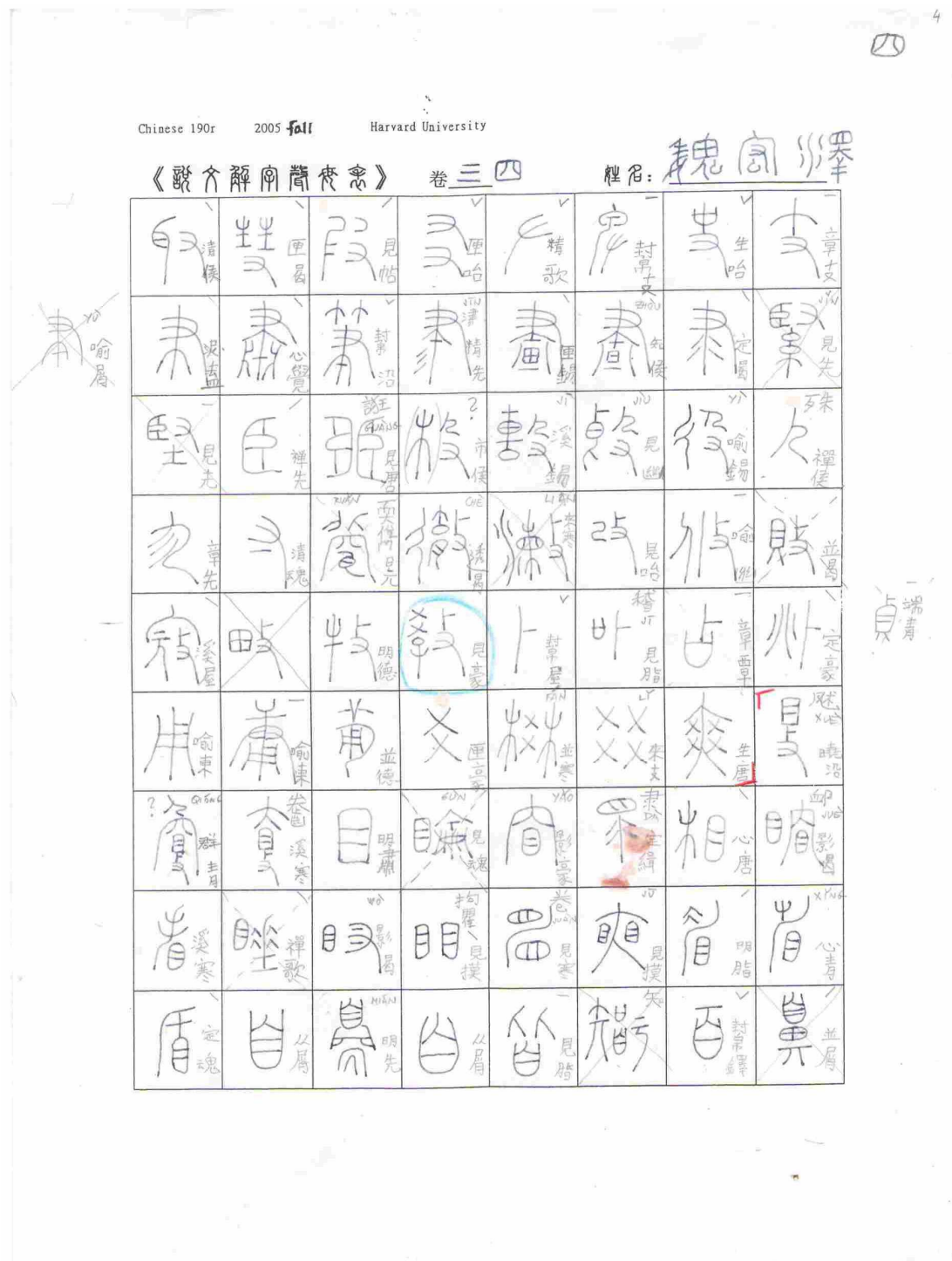


Fig. 11. *Shuowen* characters without explicit phonetic indicator, scrolls three and four.

卷四

姓名:

魏國 澤

[illegible]

252

姓名:

魏園澤

[illegible]

253

卷五


姓名:

5

254









































































姓名:

魏園澤

 夬 來登	 𠄎 端眉	 戾 並屋	 辛 早	 交 朋談	 目 厯模	 叕 初德	 𠂔 泥
 𠂔 牙微	 𠂔 昌元	 𠂔 見魂	 𠂔 心微	 𠂔 知昌	 𠂔 居冬	 𠂔 見模	 𠂔 見哥
 𠂔 見台	 𠂔 群昌	 𠂔 船必	 𠂔 明屋	 𠂔 明哈	 𠂔 封旁	 𠂔 章侯	 𠂔 明昌
 果 見歌	 枝 明微	 天 溪美	 𠂔 立昌	 果 見歌	 𠂔 影豪	 𠂔 匣模	 𠂔 端侯
 𠂔 封旁	 𠂔 疑沃	 𠂔 清哈	 𠂔 心錫	 休 曉絲	 𠂔 見青	 𠂔 端	 𠂔 幽
 𠂔 來侵	 𠂔 明模	 𠂔 生侵	 𠂔 明哈	 𠂔 目鐸	 𠂔 心唐	 𠂔 音台	 𠂔 群唐
 𠂔 精去四	 𠂔 生脂	 𠂔 昌沒	 𠂔	 𠂔 明齊	 𠂔 心鐸	 𠂔 並沒	 𠂔 莊脂
 𠂔 生清	 𠂔 亞東	 𠂔 生先	 𠂔 透金	 𠂔 生祥	 𠂔 匣模	 𠂔 云蓋	 𠂔 見脂
 𠂔 崇豪	 𠂔 幫玄血	 𠂔 清屑	 𠂔 書屋	 𠂔 見寒	 𠂔 來昌	 𠂔 云微	 𠂔 匣微

255

煙名: 魏國黑

 定模 昌	 見德 或	 溪魂 蟲	 清魂 來	 影先 來	 耳耳混合 又	 邪 力	 溪魂 來
 匣魂 豕	 見講疑歌 化	 封幫為 貝	 心歌 貝	 精寒 貝	 奉哈 負	 章日肉 貝	 章日肉 負
 章肩 貝	 明齊 貝	 幫益 貝	 影圭月 貝	 影合 貝	 匪哈 貝	 影圭月 貝	 影圭月 貝
 日肩 日	 精幽 日	 精幽 日	 精幽 日	 云蓋 日	 影圭月 日	 昌唐 日	 昌唐 日
 日肩 日	 心鐸 日	 見魂 日	 端模 日	 端寒 日	 影元 日	 邪元 日	 邪元 日
 從屋 日	 精圭月 日	 定蓋 日	 疑蓋 日	 端寒 日	 明唐 日	 見青 日	 明唐 日
 邪鐸 日	 影元 日	 疑蓋 日	 心肅 日	 端歌 日	 影元 日	 見元 日	 見元 日
 匣侵 日	 匣先 日	 詞、定、能 日	 來肩 日	 心屋 日	 來肩 日	 刺、清、鉤 日	 精幽 日
 見德 日	 端寒 日	 以、能 日	 端圭月 日	 溪德 日	 來肩 日	 匣歌 日	 心、能 日

256

卷八

姓名:

[illegible]

257

《說文解字》卷八 九 隹部

𪚩	𪚪	𪚫	𪚬	𪚭	𪚮	𪚯	𪚰
𪚱	𪚲	𪚳	𪚴	𪚵	𪚶	𪚷	𪚸
𪚹	𪚺	𪚻	𪚼	𪚽	𪚾	𪚿	𪚿
𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿
𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿
𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿
𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿
𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿	𪚿

𪚿 𪚿 𪚿 𪚿 𪚿 𪚿 𪚿 𪚿

Fig. 19. Shuowen characters without explicit phonetic indicator, scrolls eight and nine.

姓名:

明宵	邪歌	匣侯	心台	章台	精眉	來青	心模
出宗魂	精侯	影先	影眉	生德	精唐	封常錫	井
智臨	見覺	喻先	邪先	繫			見德
見清	見微	明微	非眉	影微	疑侯	心脂	喻
生寒	疑侵	精眉	生先	像	疑談	溪模	書模
曉寒	喻沃	庚蒸德	疑歌	匣寒	疑微	禪鐸	溪清
疑談	來微	定唐	明沒	喻唐	日談	日台	泥台
書	通	監劇	疑微	封韓	邪	心脂	見
書	匣模	透寒	定魂	定脂	邪脂	喻	邪

廟

260

十四

《說文解字》卷十

姓召:

𤇗	𤇘	𤇙	𤇚	𤇛	𤇜	𤇝	𤇞
明模	張寒	張寒	章佳	非從	心合	知合	封第
𤇟	𤇠	𤇡	𤇢	𤇣	𤇤	𤇥	𤇦
定聲	精寒	非帖	來屋	影影	清模	定先	透沃
𤇧	𤇨	𤇩	𤇪	𤇫	𤇬	𤇭	𤇮
崇談	透模	以肩	影寒	影寒	影寒	明寒	匣寒
𤇯	𤇰	𤇱	𤇲	𤇳	𤇴	𤇵	𤇶
溪寒	明寒	見易	見易	曉微	並肉	來脂	曉微
𤇷	𤇸	𤇹	𤇺	𤇻	𤇼	𤇽	𤇾
曉微	疑先	疑先	書模	曉微	曉微	曉微	曉微
𤇿	𤈀	𤈁	𤈂	𤈃	𤈄	𤈅	𤈆
精寒	旁寒	昌寒	見唐	見唐	曉微	云火	邪寒
𤈇	𤈈	𤈉	𤈊	𤈋	𤈌	𤈍	𤈎
曉微	心寒	來先	曉微	初東	以火	匣寒	章寒
𤈏	𤈐	𤈑	𤈒	𤈓	𤈔	𤈕	𤈖
昌寒	莊寒	曉微	定昌	見依	見依	見依	以脂
𤈗	𤈘	𤈙	𤈚	𤈛	𤈜	𤈝	𤈞
以寒	書寒	莊寒	疑模	見寒	見寒	見寒	見寒

焚

𤇗

𤇗

Fig. 21. Shuowen characters without explicit phonetic indicator, scroll ten.

[illegible]

262

《說文解字詁林》 卷十一十二 姓名:

人 口	纒 金 錫	明 錫	見 屋	心 魂	幫 堂	通 堂	端	雨 車 龍
來 音	雲 模	來 微	未 侯	云 魂	鍾 模	=	不	龍
來 東	非 微	非 微	心 先	影 肩	溪 東	日 侯	門	龍
非 尾	章 脂	章 脂	定 哈	心 脂	來 模	匣 模	白	於 草 十 六
成 治 小 二	見 寒	溪 微	匣 寒	書 談	腹 定 先	林 微 覃	日 哈	
見 圭 月	知 齒	來 寒	徹 昌	娘 齒	以 台	書 齒	攀	
留 音 十 四	章 脂	初 孟	禪 登	章 豪	定 侯	見 微	精 金 錫	相 模
甘 非 五	清 胎	奉 哈	明 哈	影 哈	泥 模	曉 模	影 微	生
	日 模	景 寒	影 青	元 元	泥 青	來 侯	娘 元	見 元

Fig. 23. *Shuowen* characters without explicit phonetic indicator, scrolls eleven and twelve.

《說文解字聲類》 卷十二 十三 姓名：

 <small>明模</small>	 <small>影哈</small>	 <small>明先</small>	 <small>清富</small>	 <small>延昌</small>	 <small>封第樓</small>	 <small>敷沒</small>	 <small>以齊</small>
 <small>代</small>	 <small>移以</small>	 <small>喻樓</small>	 <small>見昌</small>	 <small>端脂</small>	 <small>思致文</small>	 <small>日車个</small>	 <small>見聲</small>
 <small>見真</small>	 <small>幸曹德</small>	 <small>通德</small>	 <small>精談</small>	 <small>明模</small>	 <small>章德</small>	 <small>从寒</small>	 <small>是冬</small>
 <small>善也歌</small>	 <small>羣早固</small>	 <small>右曹華</small>	 <small>疑魂</small>	 <small>章德</small>	 <small>明唐</small>	 <small>精雷年</small>	
 <small>貝昌固</small>	 <small>後外臣百</small>	 <small>溪侯</small>	 <small>方非唐</small>	 <small>从唐</small>	 <small>溪屋</small>	 <small>莊台</small>	
 <small>疑歌</small>	 <small>見冬三</small>	 <small>以先</small>	 <small>透下</small>	 <small>書</small>	 <small>群唐</small>	 <small>厘先</small>	 <small>見來昌</small>
 <small>匣元</small>	 <small>心哀</small>	 <small>明元</small>	 <small>見元</small>	 <small>章德</small>	 <small>从昌</small>	 <small>見元</small>	 <small>心校</small>
 <small>心口</small>	 <small>章脂</small>	 <small>生治又</small>	 <small>曉微</small>	 <small>徹另因</small>	 <small>祥居</small>	 <small>通昌</small>	 <small>並旅片</small>
 <small>見魂</small>	 <small>定冬</small>	 <small>明侯</small>	 <small>見模</small>	 <small>舟召歌</small>	 <small>見哈</small>	 <small>明唐</small>	 <small>以冬三</small>

Fig. 24. *Shuowen* characters without explicit phonetic indicator, scrolls twelve and thirteen.

[illegible]

265

《說文解字》

卷一

釋名:

𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	四	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔
𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔
𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔
𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔
𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔
𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔
𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔
𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔

抄先

抄

𠂔

Fig. 26. Shuowen characters without explicit phonetic indicator, scroll fourteen.

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